

MARVEL

198
BEMIS
BURROWS
ORTEGO
MILLA

MOON KNIGHT



Marc Spector. Steven Grant. Jake Lockley. Each a distinct personality of one man vying for control. Spector, the original personality, has asserted his dominance and fights to retain that control. But years ago, as a mercenary, Spector died in Egypt under a statue of the moon god **Khonshu**. In the shadow of the ancient deity, Marc returned to life. From then on, Marc took on a new aspect in honor of Khonshu, dedicating his second life to fighting crime as...



The Société des Sadiques, a secret group of uber-sadists, is holding its biannual feast for new inductees. As the newcomers got to know each other, Moon Knight revealed himself to have infiltrated their inner circle, on the hunt for their mysterious leader—Ernst, the Nazi who Marc witnessed torturing a man in his synagogue as a child, the traumatic event that fed into Marc's dissociative identity disorder. But Ernst expected Marc to find him one day, and now he can follow through on his ultimate plan...

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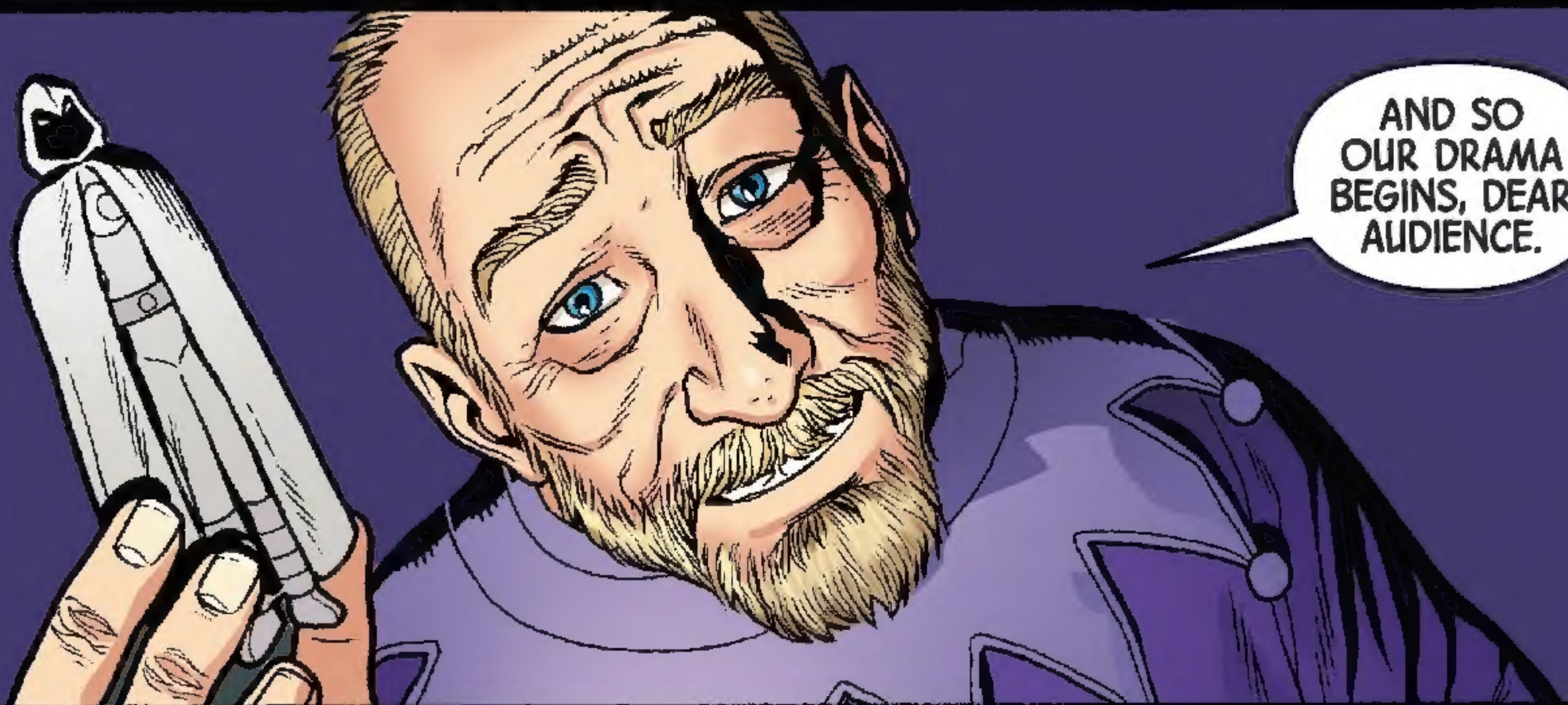
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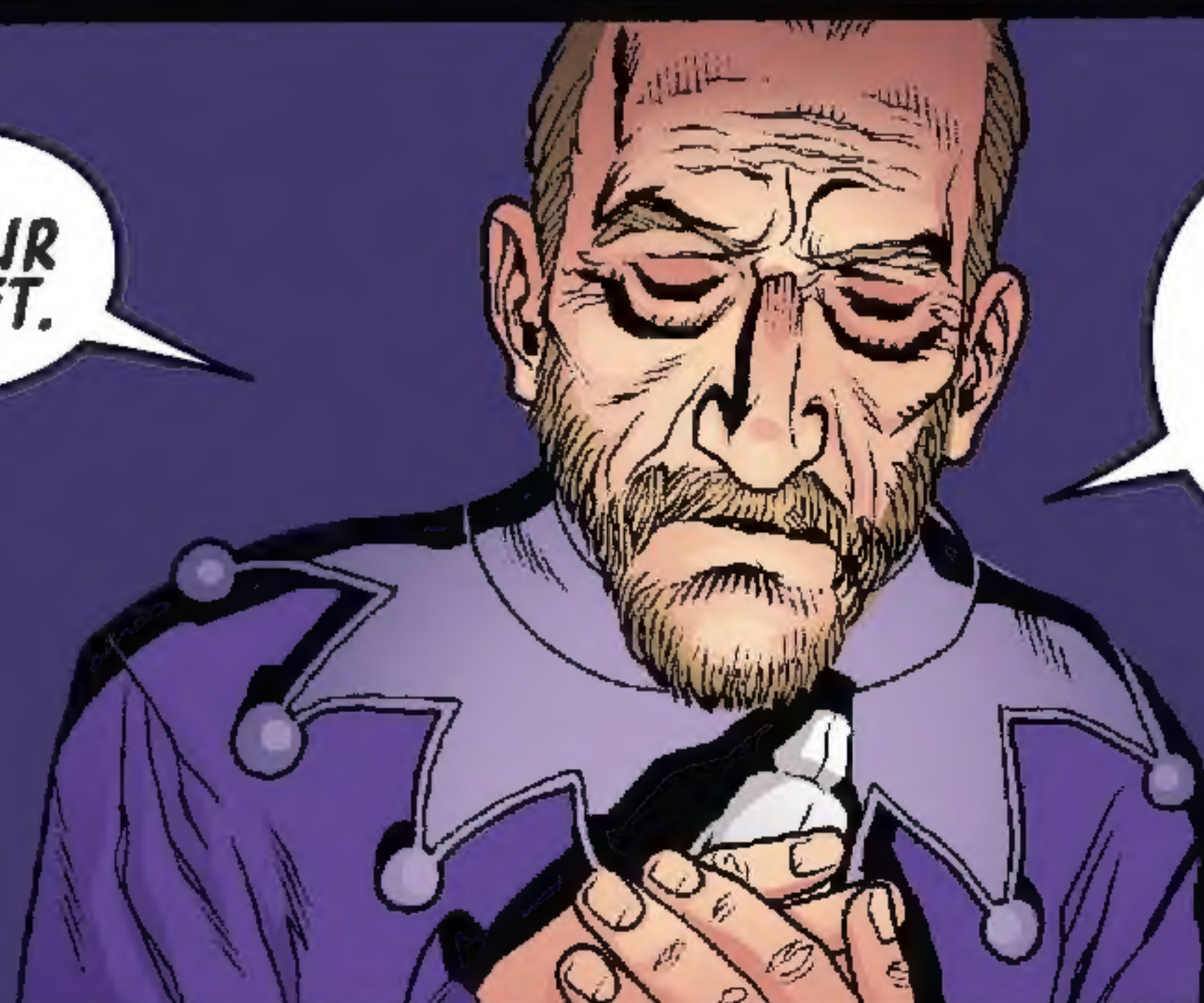
AND SO
OUR DRAMA
BEGINS, DEAR
AUDIENCE.



IN WHICH
A FLAWED HERO
IS TESTED. HIS ALREADY
DUBIOUS MORAL
STANDING CALLED
INTO QUESTION.

IS HE
MAN, OR IS HE
DRAGON?

TODAY, THE
**SOCIÉTÉ DES
SADIQUES** WILL
TEASE OUT THE
ESSENCE OF
HIS CORE.

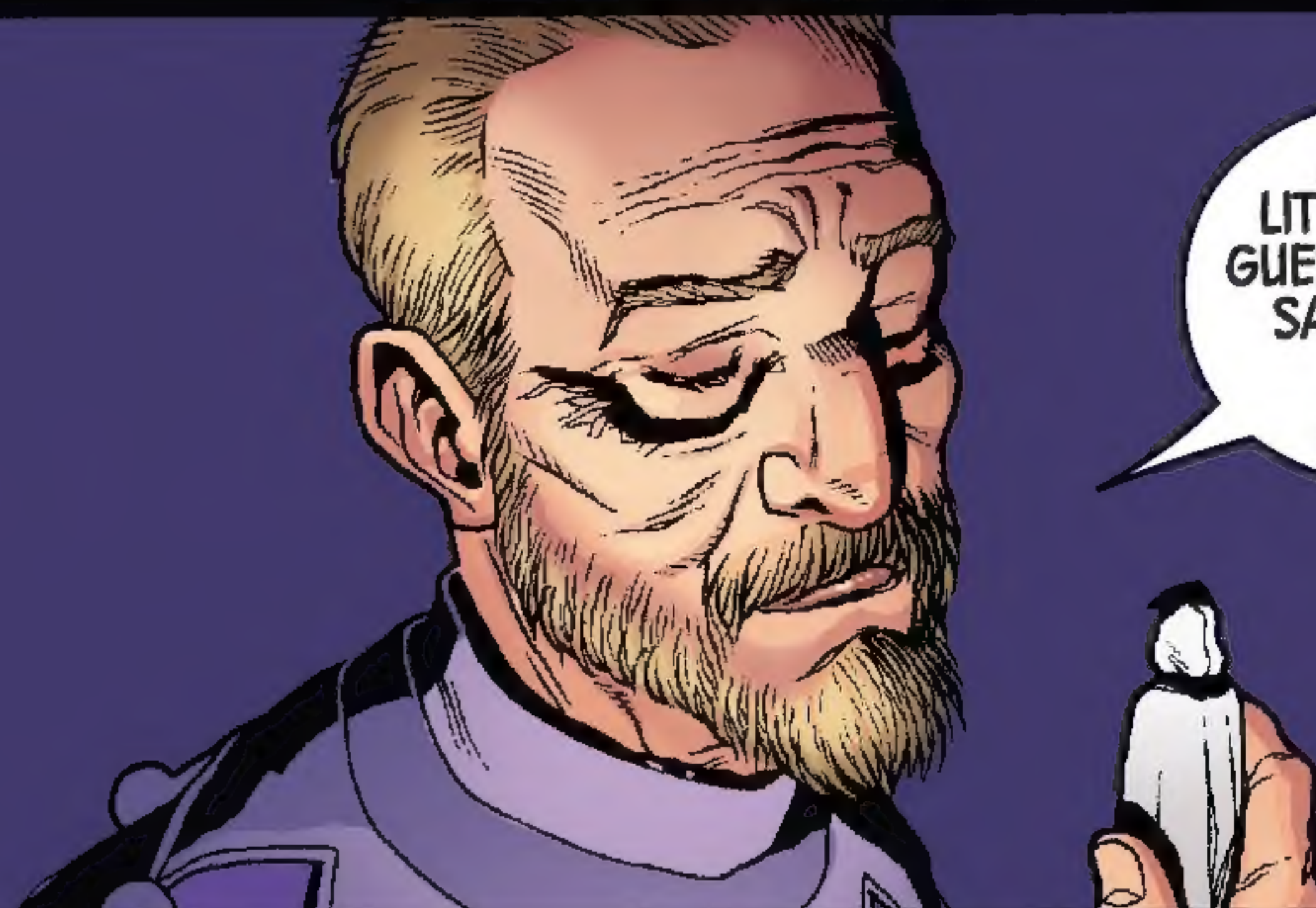


I CONFESS...
THERE'S A PART OF
ME THAT WANTS TO
SEE HIM ESCAPE THIS
SPIRITUALLY
UNSCATHED.

BUT
THIS IS **OUR
GAUNTLET.**

WHERE THE
CONTENDERS FOR
ENTRANCE INTO OUR
SOCIETY ARE MADE TO
DISCOVER JUST HOW
TRULY MERCILESS
THEY ARE.

IN THE END,
THEY'LL FACE ONE
ANOTHER, AND IF THEY
CAN LIVE UP TO **THAT...**
THEN WE SHALL
BLESS THEM.



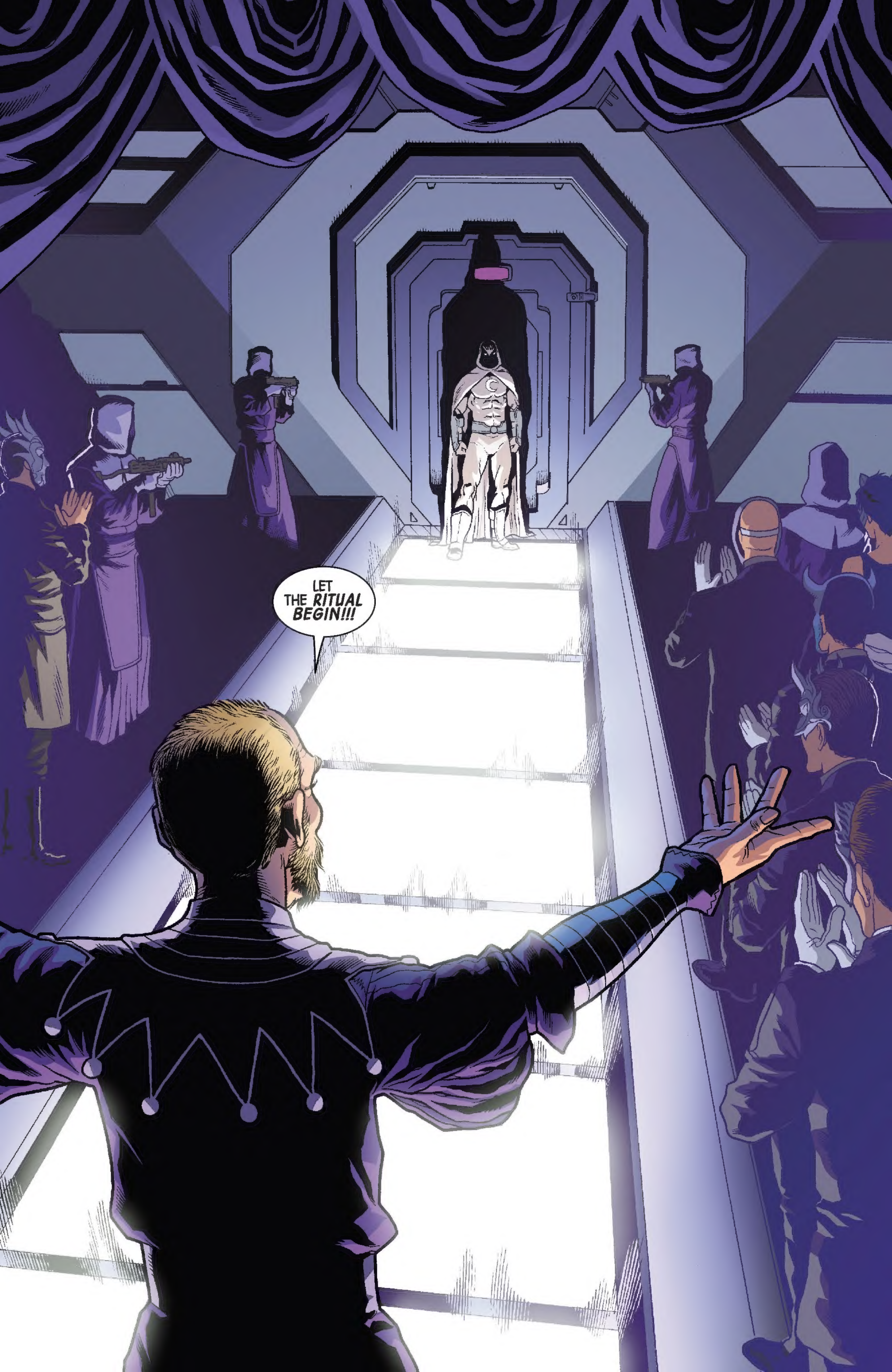
AS FOR OUR
LITTLE "SURPRISE"
GUEST...I CAN ONLY
SAY HIS ARRIVAL
HAS BEEN
ANTICIPATED.

CALL
HIM A **PET
PROJECT.**

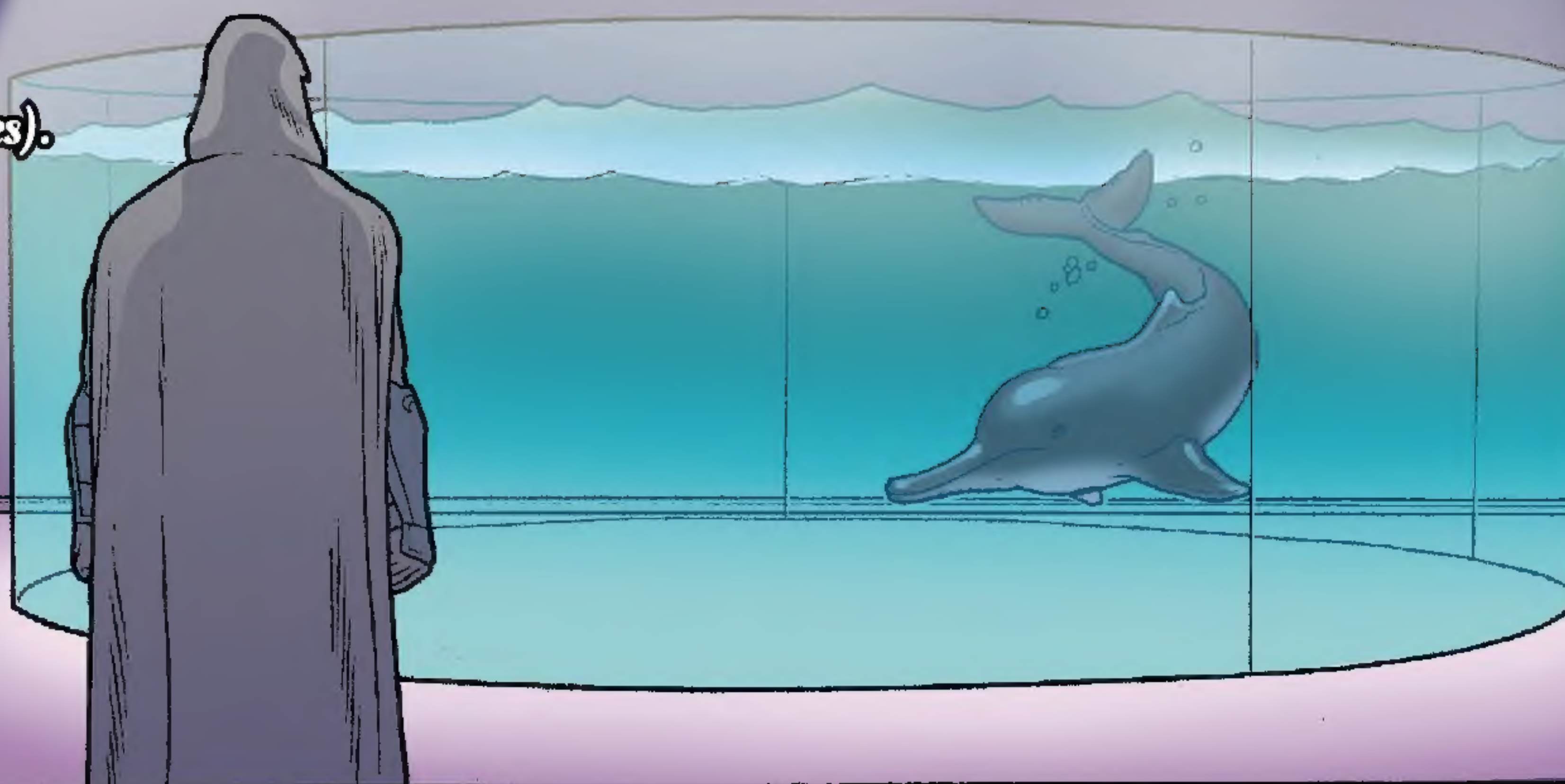


IF I WERE
A BETTING MAN...
I'D BET THAT WHAT
WE ARE ABOUT TO
WITNESS...

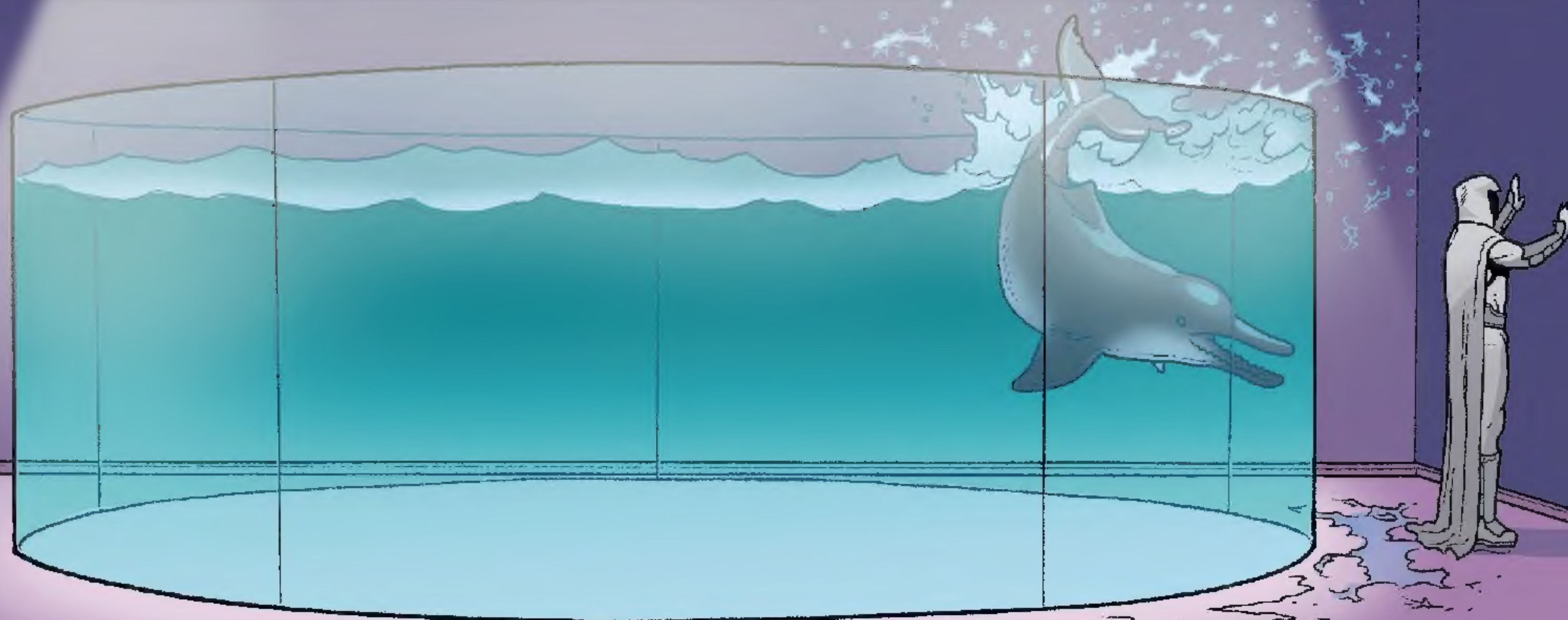
...IS THE
BIRTH OF A
MONSTER.



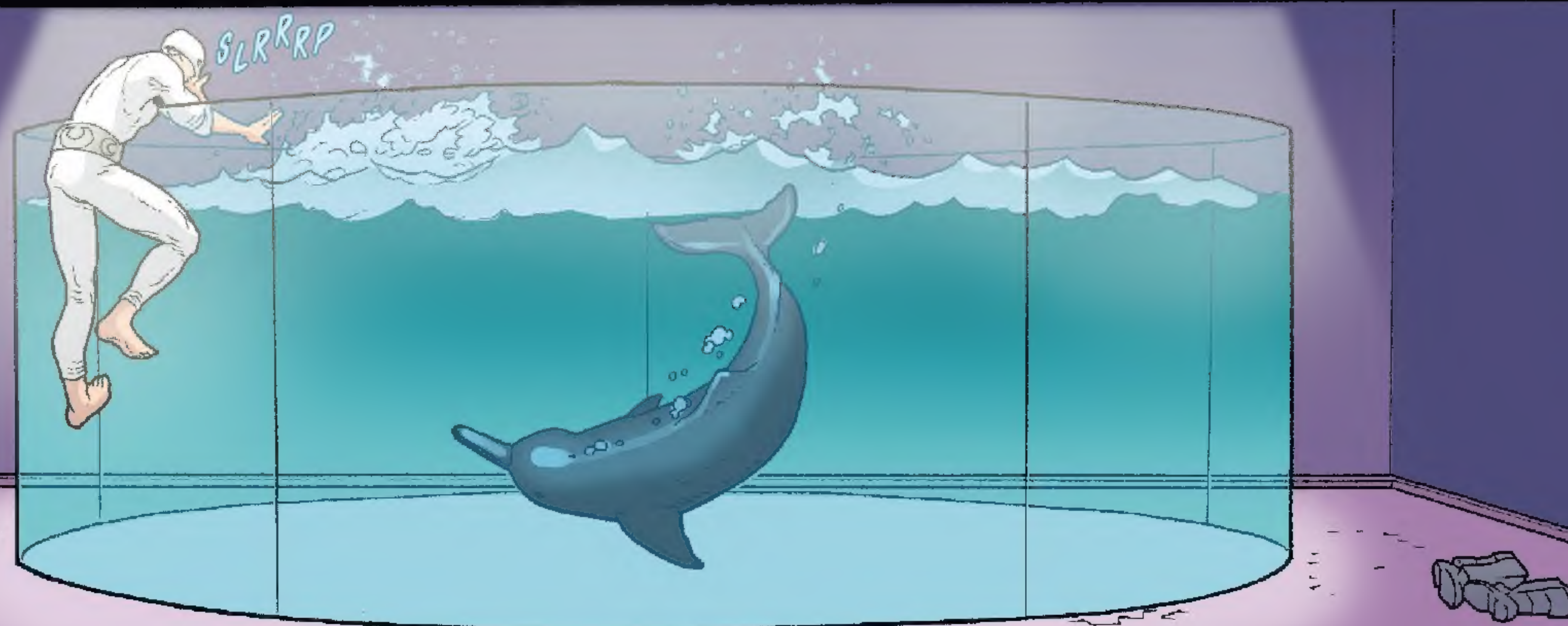
First Trial.
Man vs. Dolphin
(infected with rabies).
Day One.



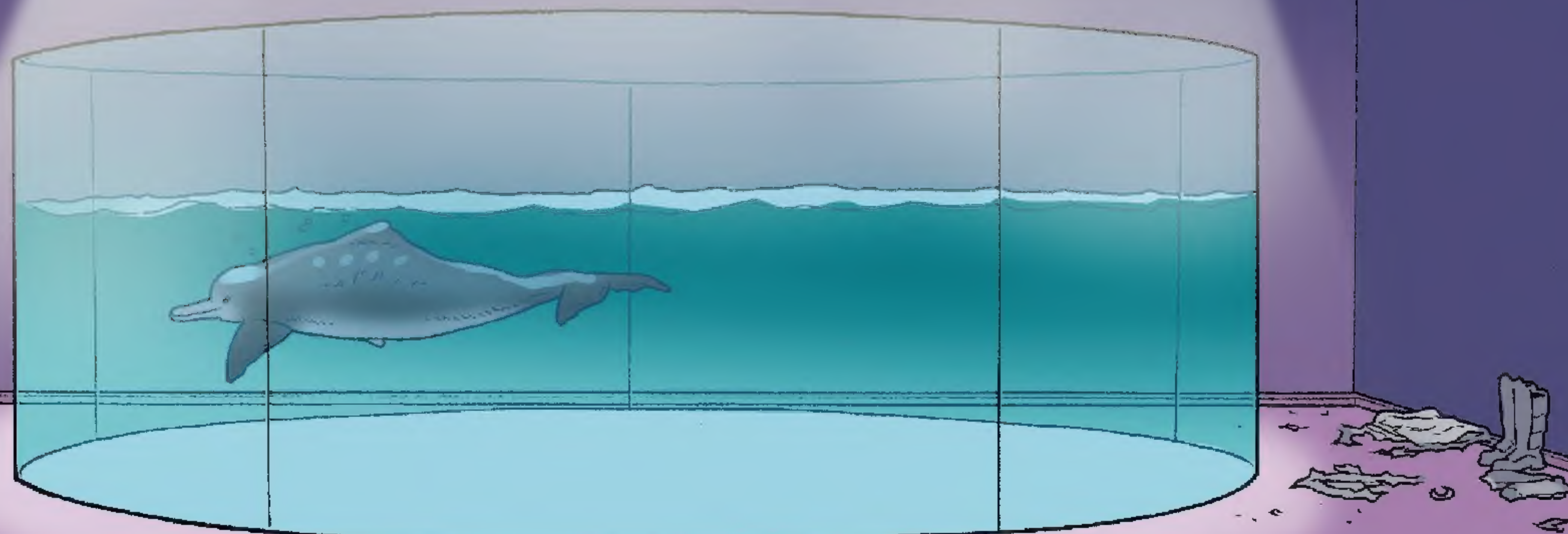
Day Two.



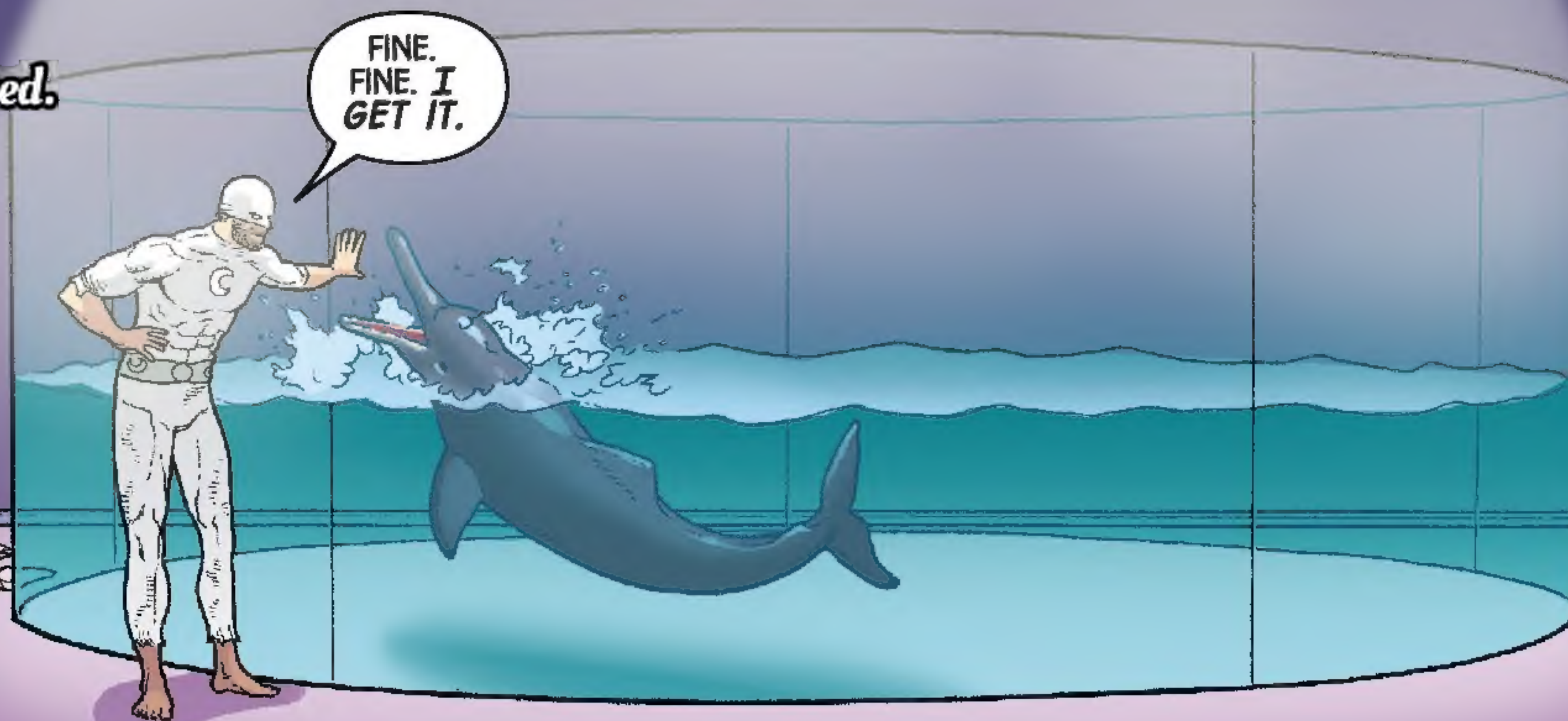
Day Three.



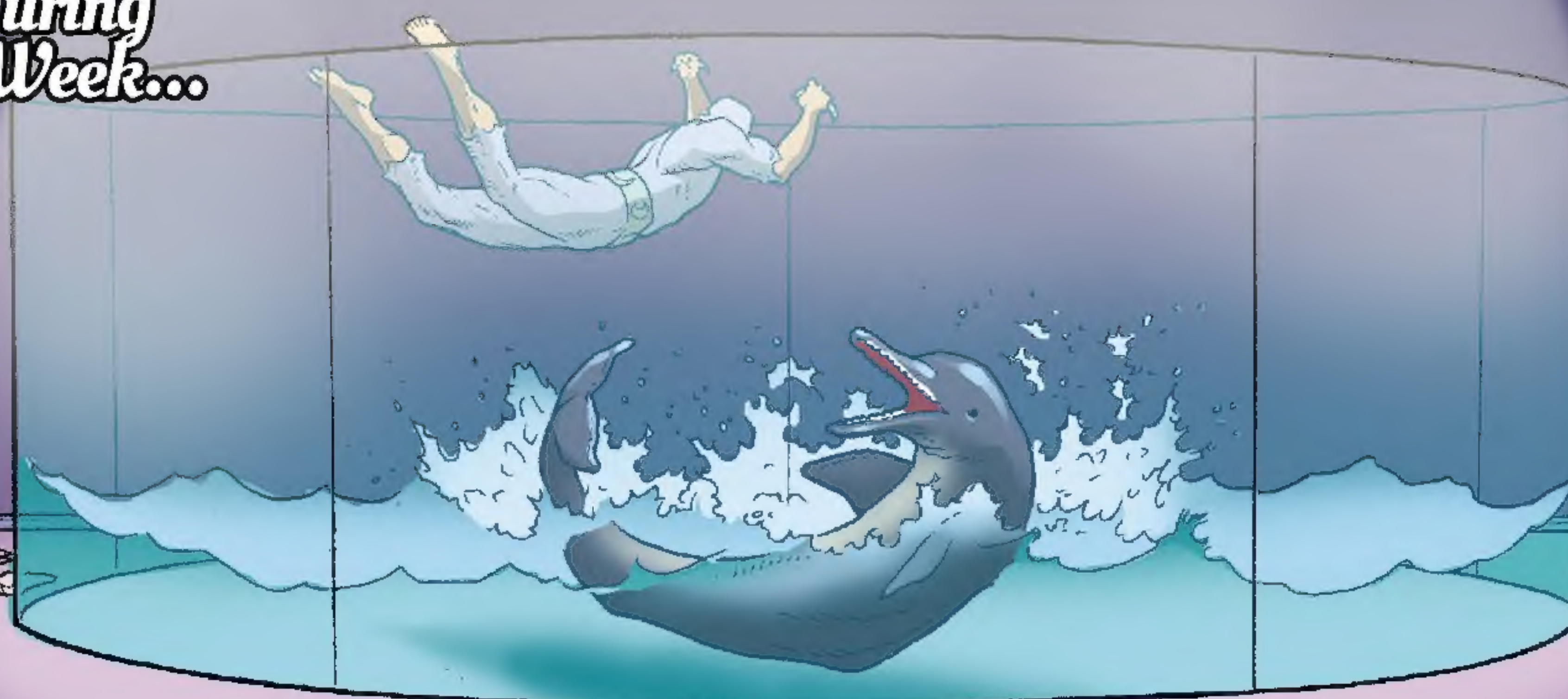
Day Four.



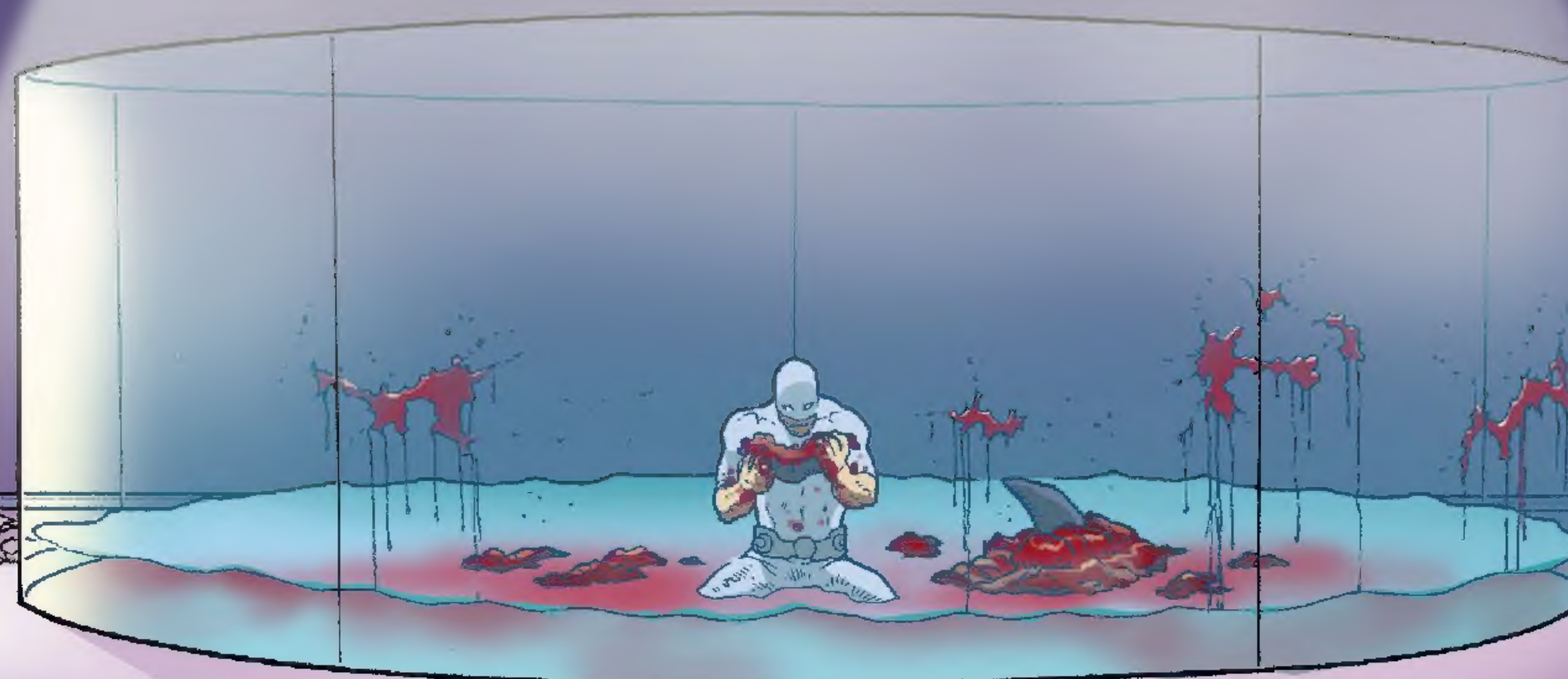
Day Five.
The Plan is Hatched.



**Sometime During
the Second Week...**



Rejoice!



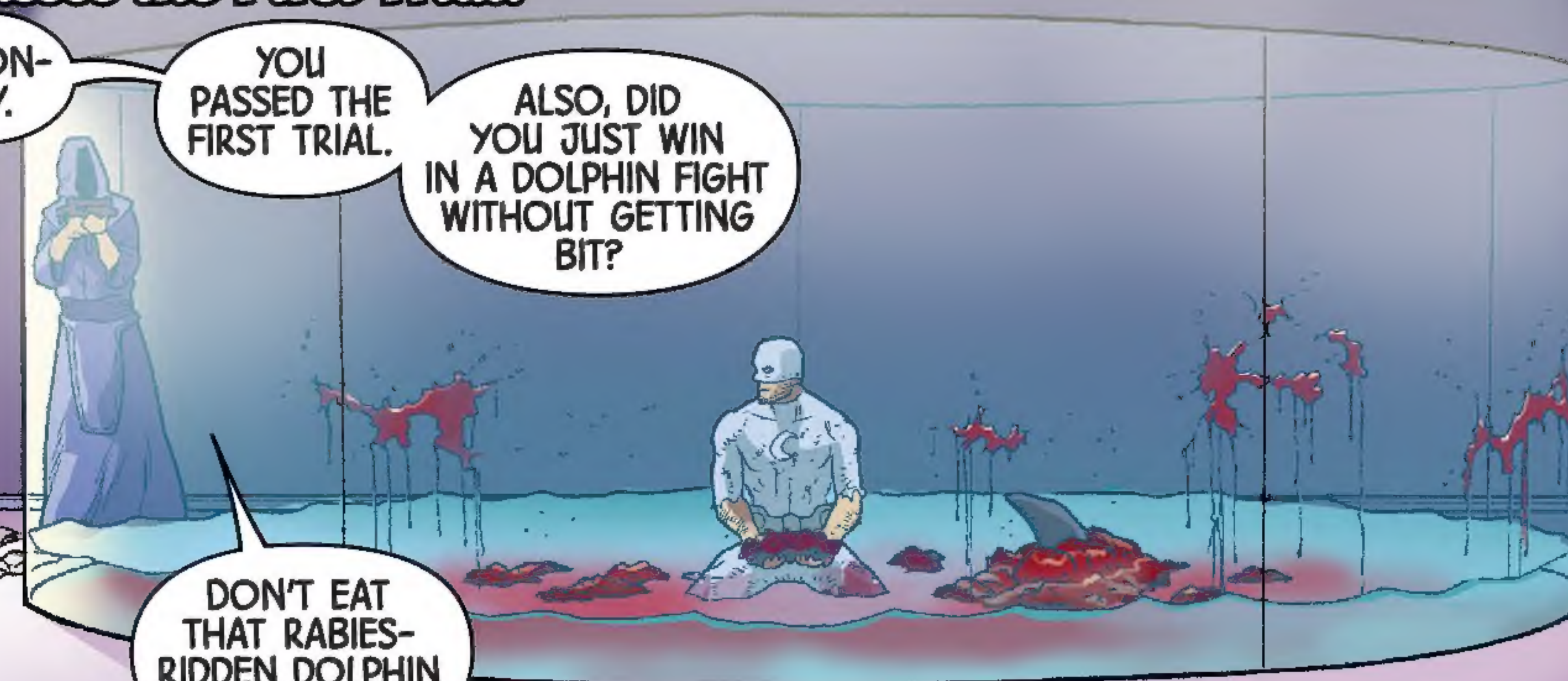
Our Hero Passes the First Trial!

MOON-
GUY.

YOU
PASSED THE
FIRST TRIAL.

ALSO, DID
YOU JUST WIN
IN A DOLPHIN FIGHT
WITHOUT GETTING
BIT?

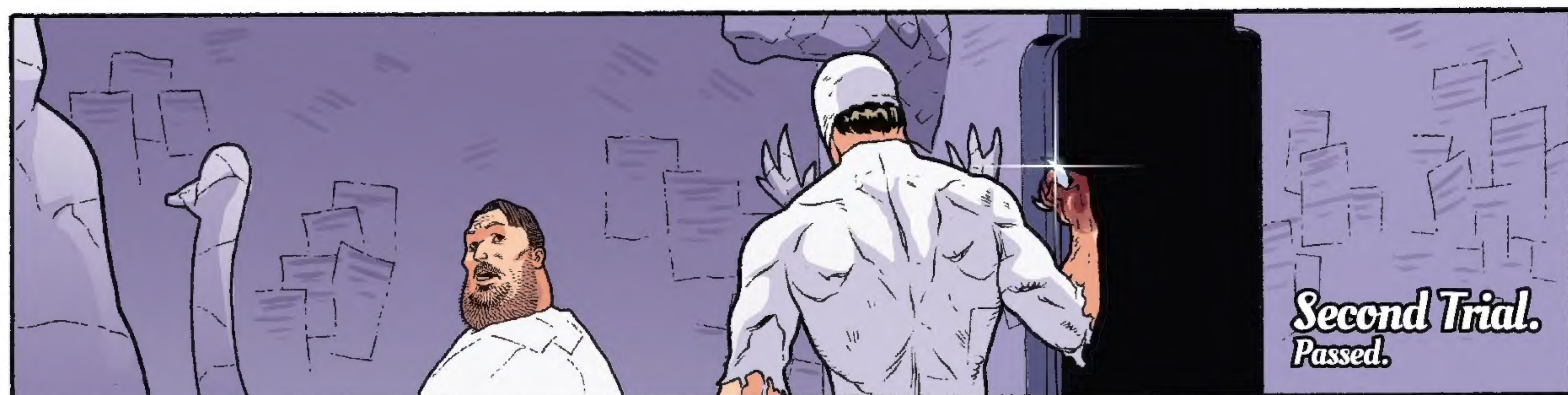
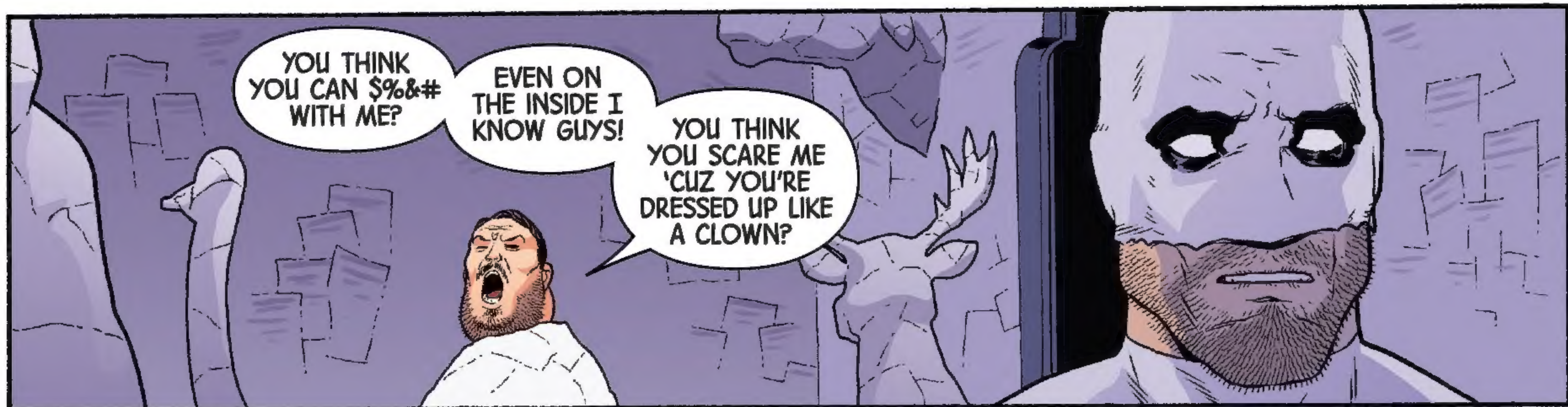
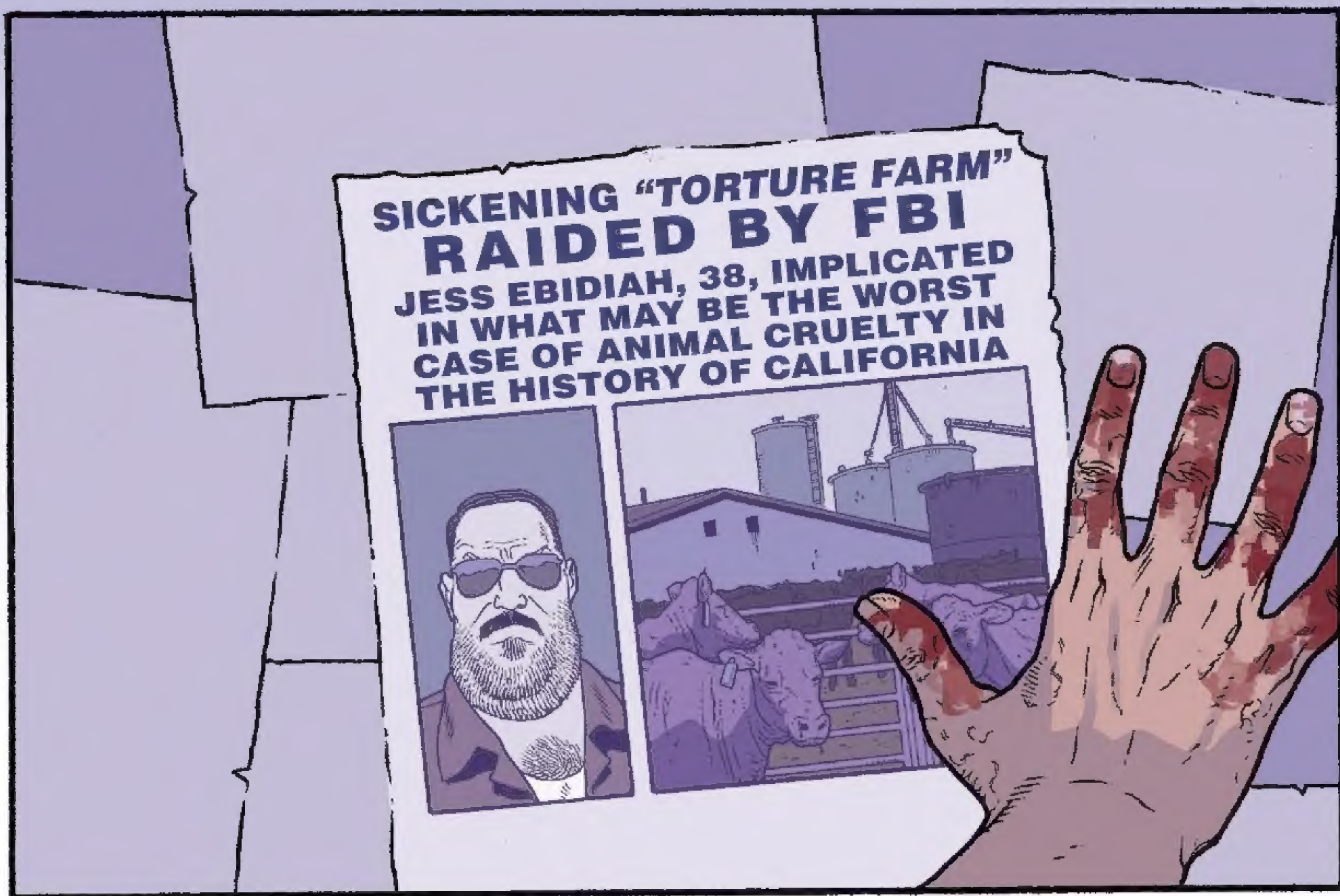
DON'T EAT
THAT RABIES-
RIDDEN DOLPHIN
MEAT.



Second Trial.
Man vs. Inhumanity.

WAIT.

WHO'S THIS? WHAT IS THIS?!!



Third Trial.
Man vs. Himself.

ERRR...MAKE
YOURSELF
COMFORTABLE,
MARC...

I'M GREG
SALINGER. SOMETIMES
CALLED FOOLKILLER. I
DRESS UP AND FIGHT
CRIME. LIKE YOU.

I'M...I'M
ALSO A LICENSED
SHRINK.

MARC,
THEY'RE
MAKING ME
DO THIS.

MRGH!

I'M...
THEY HAVE MY
FIANCEE.

THEY SAID
IF I DON'T
ASSESS YOU...
THEY'RE GOING
TO...

MARC, CAN
YOU TELL ME
EVERYTHING YOU
JUST DID TO THE
MAN IN THE
LAST ROOM?

Three Minutes Later.

HERK!

THAT'S...
THAT'S RIGHT,
I BET YOU
DID.

YEAH. I
DIDN'T KILL HIM,
THOUGH.

I DON'T
KILL PEOPLE.
MOSTLY.

MARC, IT'S MY
OPINION THAT YOU
SUFFER FROM CERTAIN...
OTHER CHEMICAL--AND
PERSONALITY-BASED--
DISORDERS OUTSIDE YOUR
CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS OF
DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY
DISORDER.

MARC, HAS
ANYONE EVER SPOKEN
WITH YOU ABOUT
BIPOLAR II? OR THE SPECTRUM
OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS
RELATING TO BORDERLINE
THINKING?

SEE, I KNOW
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO
WANT TO STOP CRIMINALS
FROM HURTING PEOPLE, BUT...
THE SORT OF ACTIONS YOU
DESCRIBE SUGGEST A
PATHOLOGY THAT...

ALL VERY COMMON. THESE
THINGS DON'T EVER **MAKE**
YOU A MEAN PERSON.

ON THEIR
OWN THEY IN NO
WAY IMPLY...

BUT THE
MIX...YOU'VE
GOT A HEADY MIX,
THERE, CHAMP.

AND IT'S
PRETTY APPARENT
SOMEONE HURT YOU
VERY BADLY AT
SOME POINT.

THE THING
ABOUT IT IS...

...I THINK YOU
NEED TO ADMIT TO
YOURSELF THAT YOUR
NEED TO HURT PEOPLE
MAY GO BEYOND
JUST WANTING TO
PROTECT OTHERS.

AN
ADDICTION
TO SADISM ISN'T
ANYTHING TO
SCOFF AT...

...OR FRAME
WITH A PRETTY
COSTUME
AND MAKE
DISAPPEAR.

I'M
SORRY,
MARC.

YOU HAVE
TO START THINKING
OF IT LIKE...A
NEARLY INCURABLE
DISEASE.



Third Trial Completed.
The Hero Is Crowned a Prince of Death.



Fourth Trial.
Fun with Morpheus, Dream Eater.

SELLRRRP

HEH.

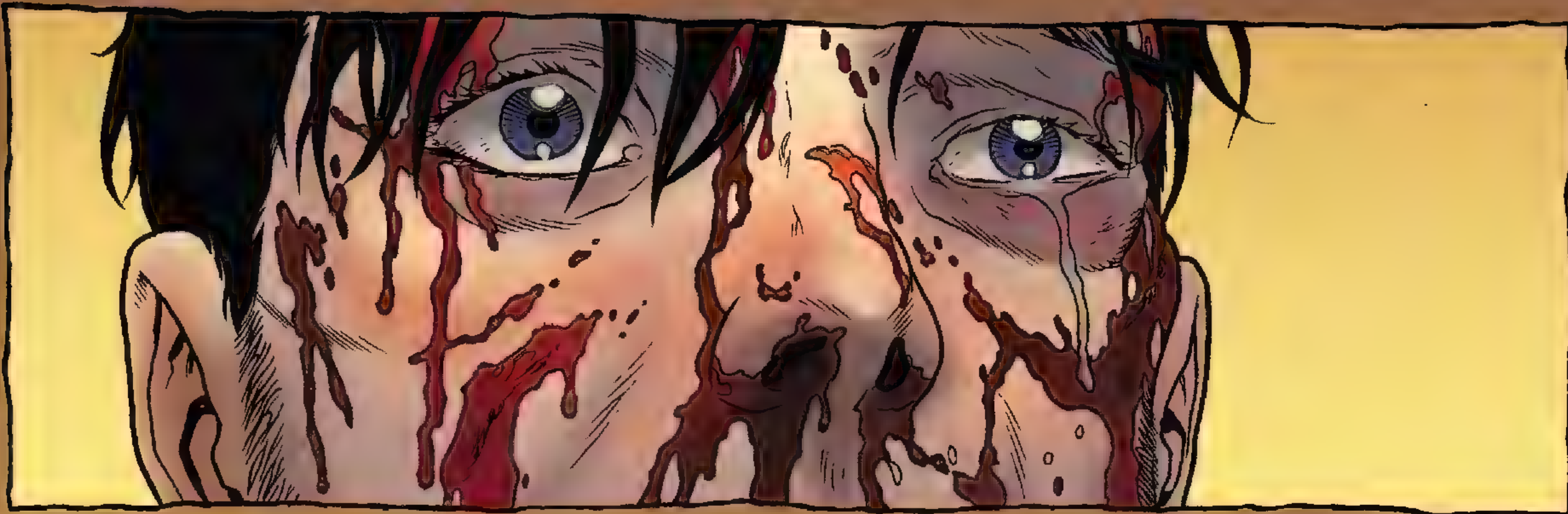
HEHEH.

THAT'S FOR
THAT TIME WITH
THE THING.

GUYS, I'M
NOT SURE I
CAN MAKE THIS
ANY WORSE
THAN IT IS.

MOON KNIGHT'S
BEEN SWIMMING IN
A PSYCHOTROPIC
NIGHTMARE FOR
FIVE HOURS
STRAIGHT.

CAN
SOMEONE
AT LEAST GET
ME A REFILL?



I THOUGHT
HE SAID HE
WANTED TO HANDLE
THIS HIMSELF.

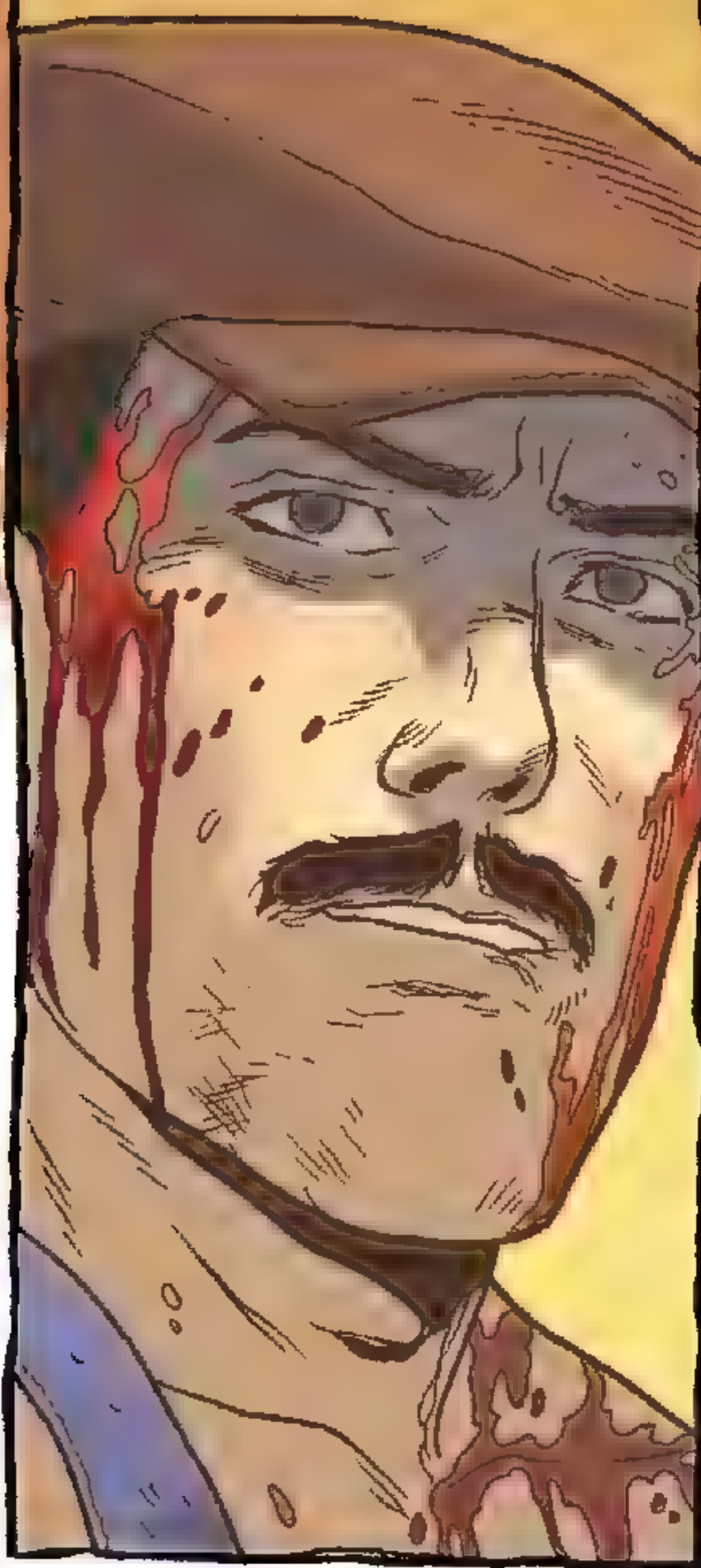
HE IS
HOLDING
ONTO A GRIP
THAT IS...
TENUOUS, TO
SAY THE
LEAST.



The Mind.



*The Robust
Undercarriage.*



The Spirit.



Fifth Trial.
Royale.



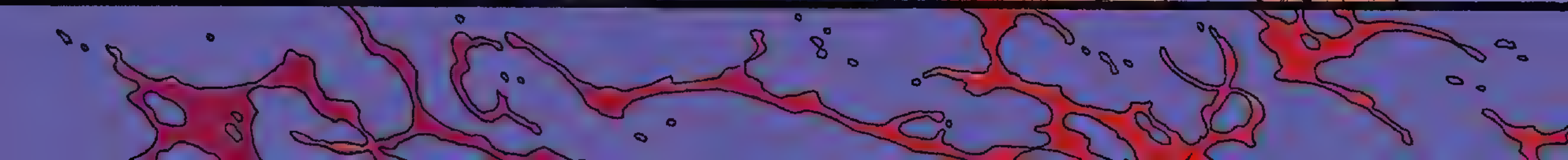
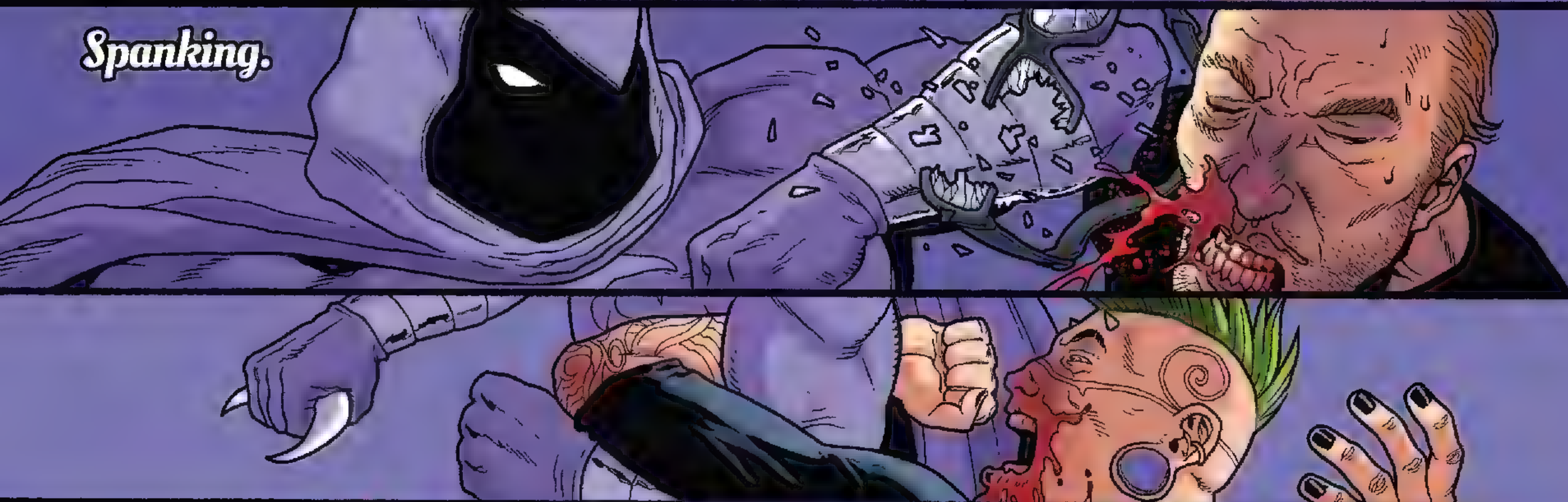
Trial?

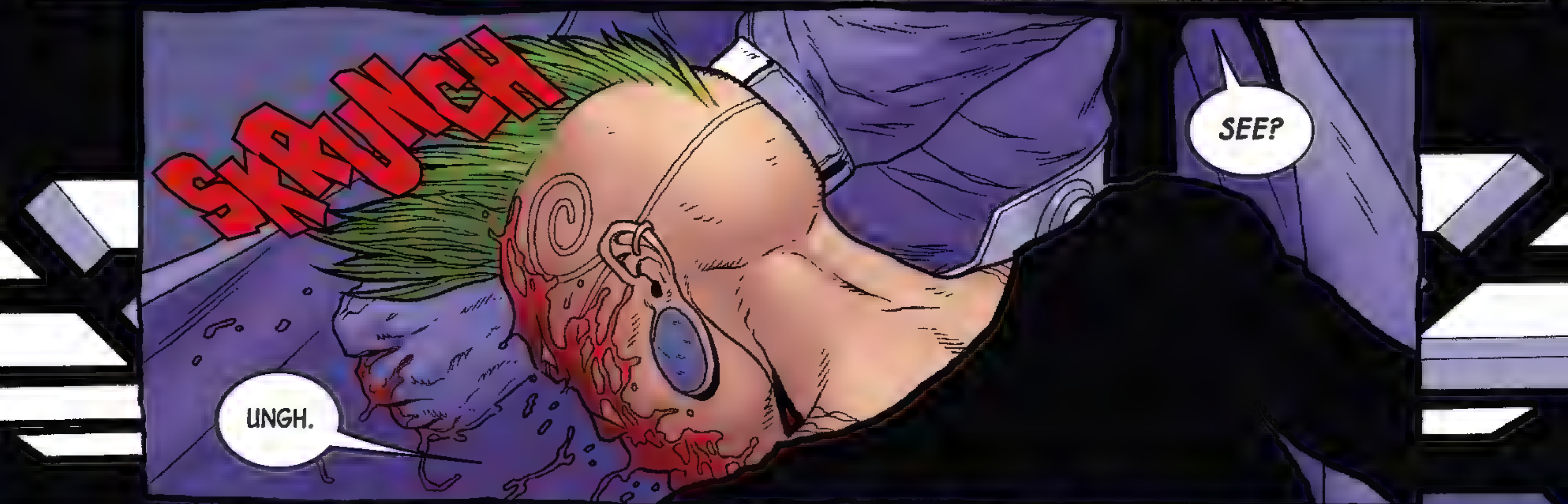


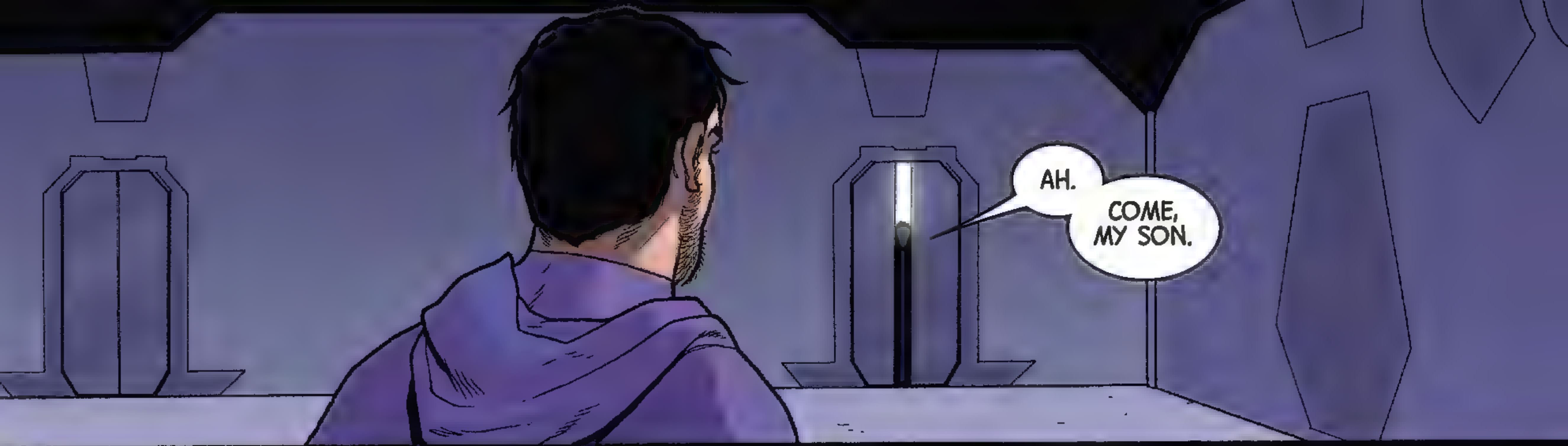
Nah.



Spanking.







AH.

COME,
MY SON.

Trial 666.

THE ENTIRE
SOCIETY, THOUGH
NOT PRESENT TONIGHT,
HAS BEEN ANTICIPATING
THIS MOMENT FOR
A LONG TIME.



I KNEW
EVENTUALLY,
WHEN YOU WERE
READY, YOU'D
TRACK ME
DOWN.

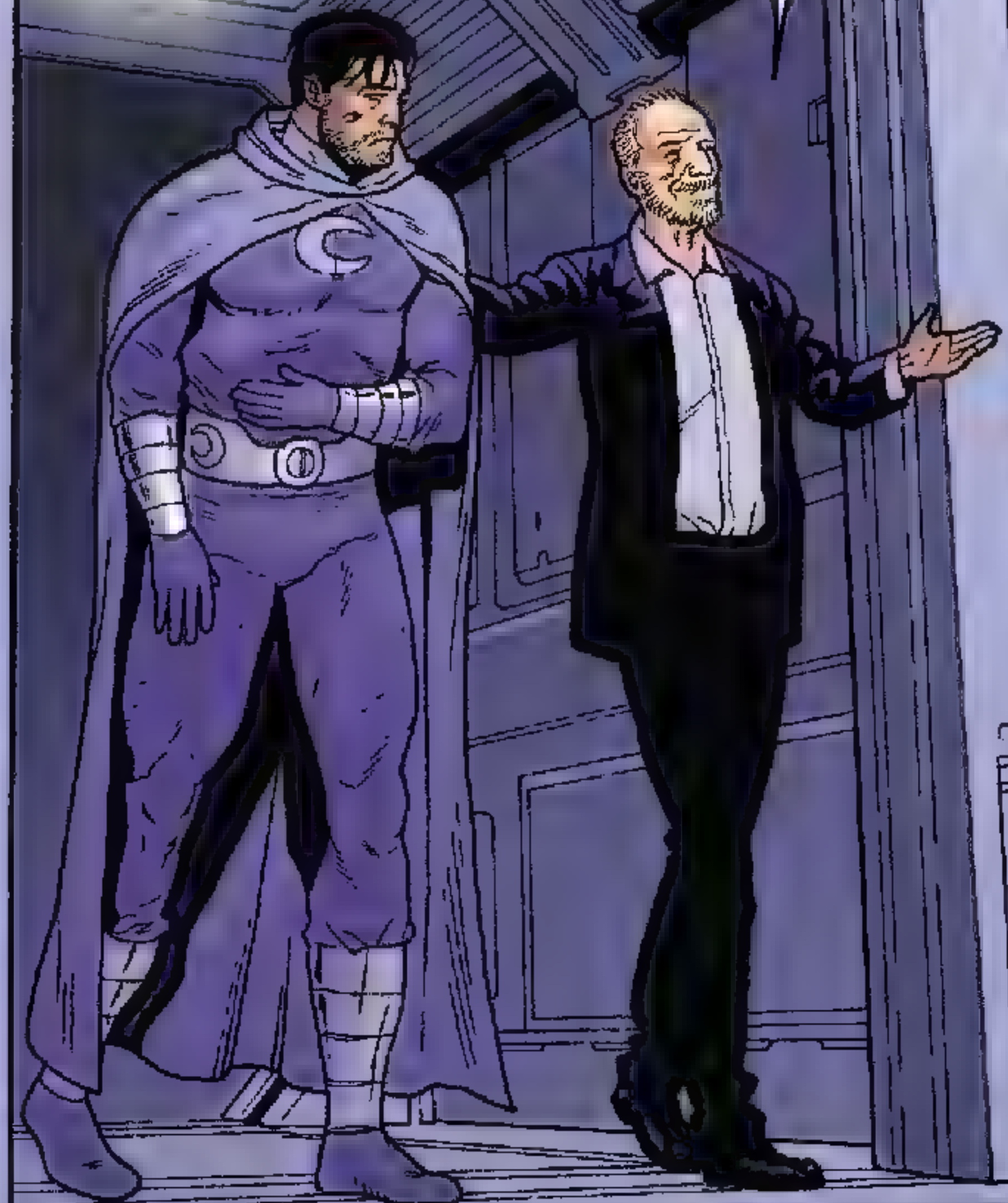
I KNEW THE
SEEDS I PLANTED
WOULD BEAR FRUIT,
MY LITTLE...FIRST-
ROUND PICK.

ALL IT TOOK
WAS THE CAREFUL
MANIPULATION OF YOUR...
FRIEND...JAKE LOCKLEY'S
UNDESIRABLE
"SOURCES."



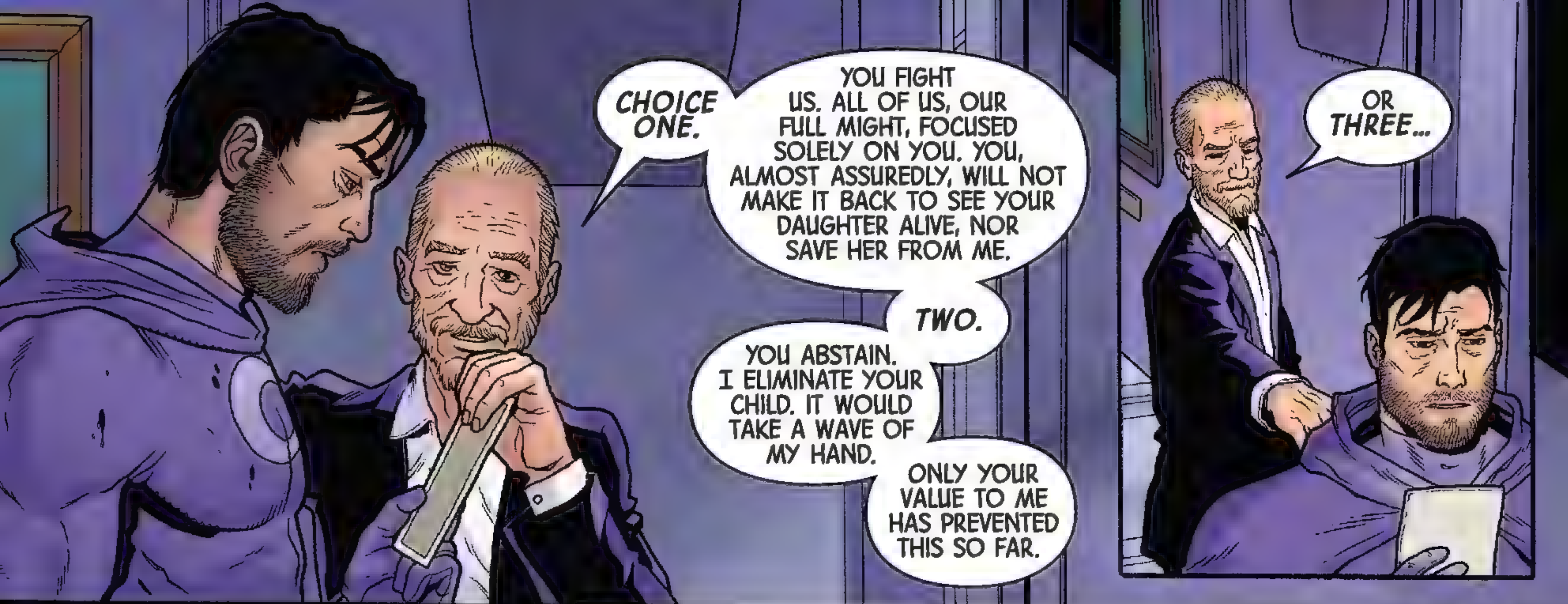
I ALWAYS
SAW SOMETHING
IN YOU.

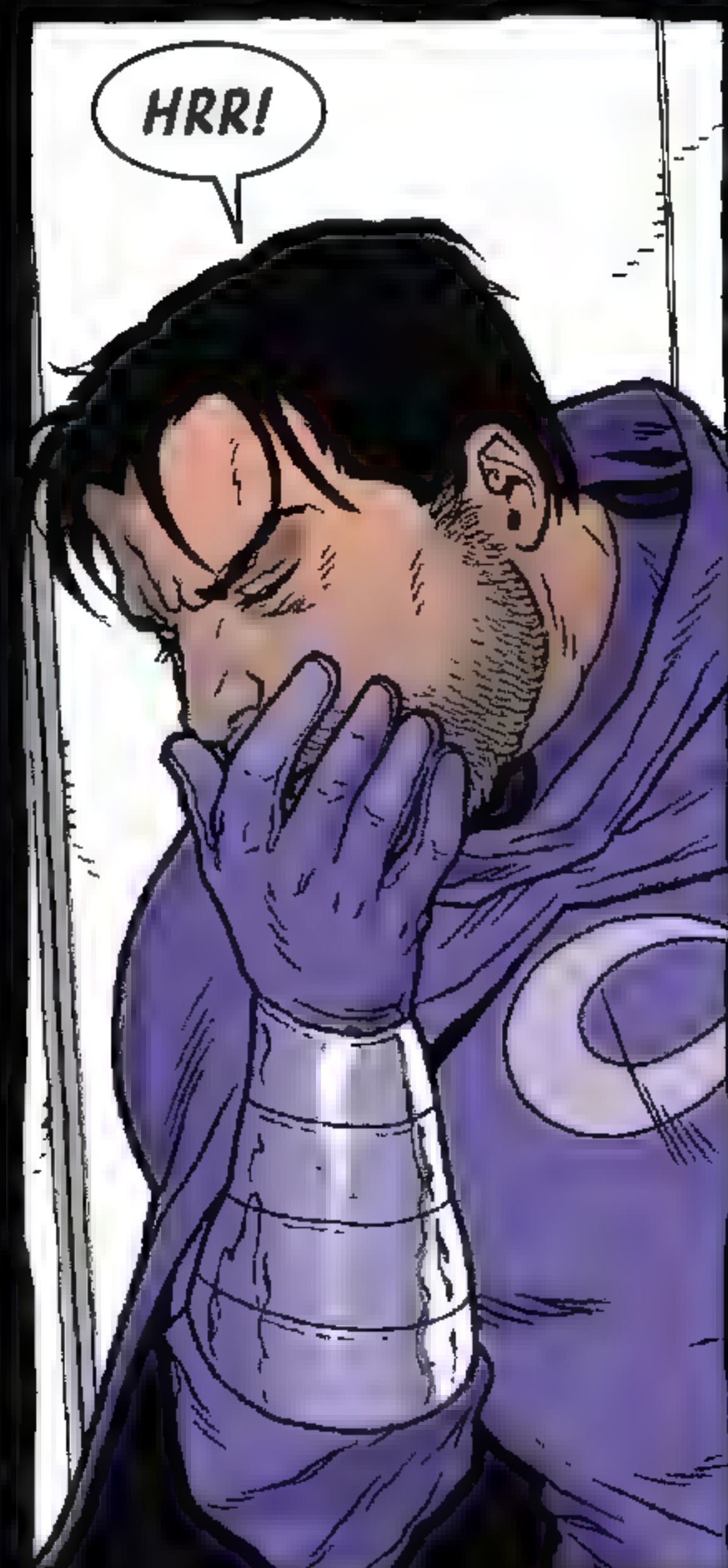
NOW YOU
MUST SEE IT IN
YOURSELF.



YOUR
CHOICE WILL
SOON BE
CLEAR.







HRR!



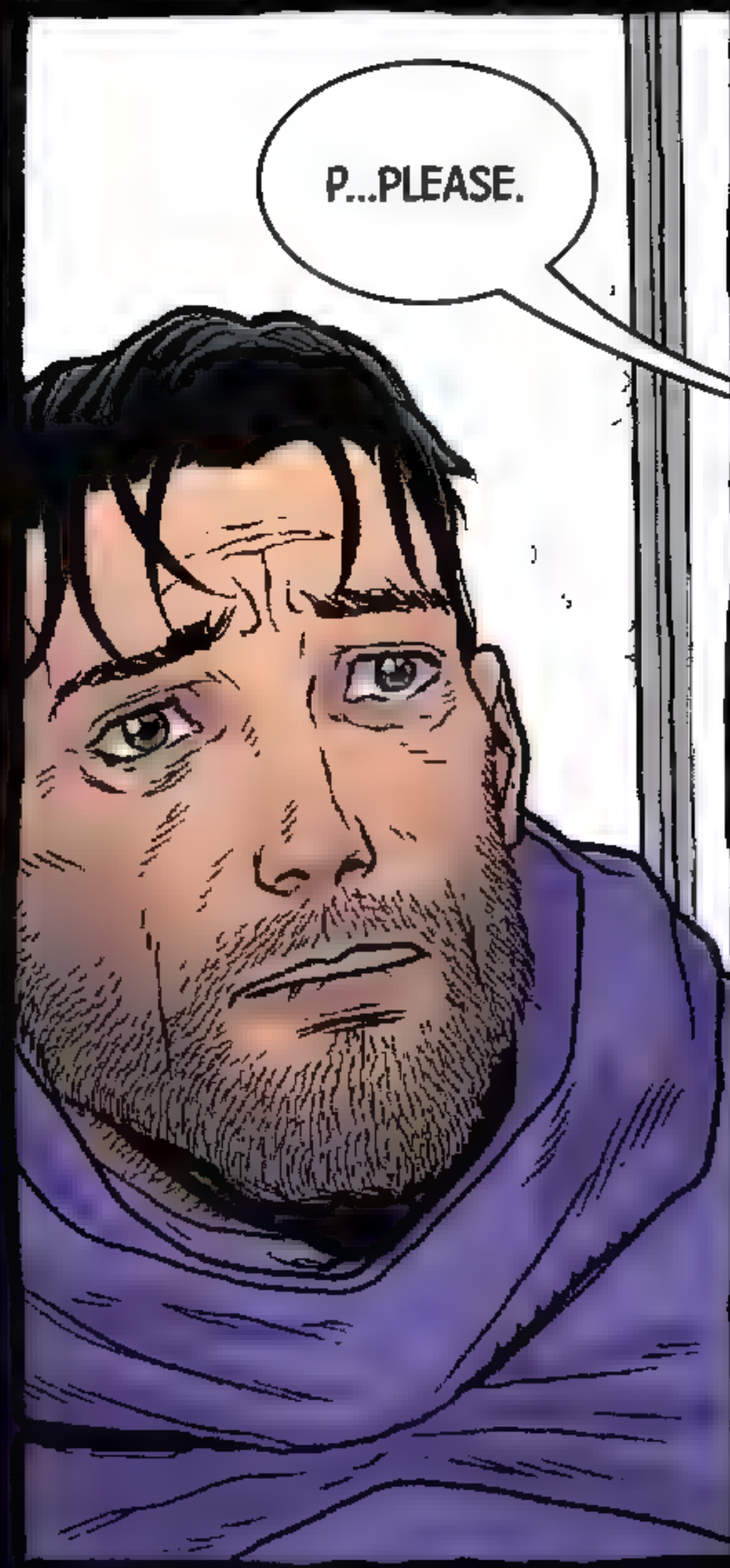
THAT
EVIL SON OF
A BITCH.



D-DOES
HE EXPECT
ME TO...

DON'T YOU
GO PUKING AND
FLIPPING OUT,
SPECTOR.

YOU KEEP IT
TOGETHER. HE'S
WATCHING.



P...PLEASE.



...HEELP...



THINK.
DIATRICE, YOUR
DAUGHTER.

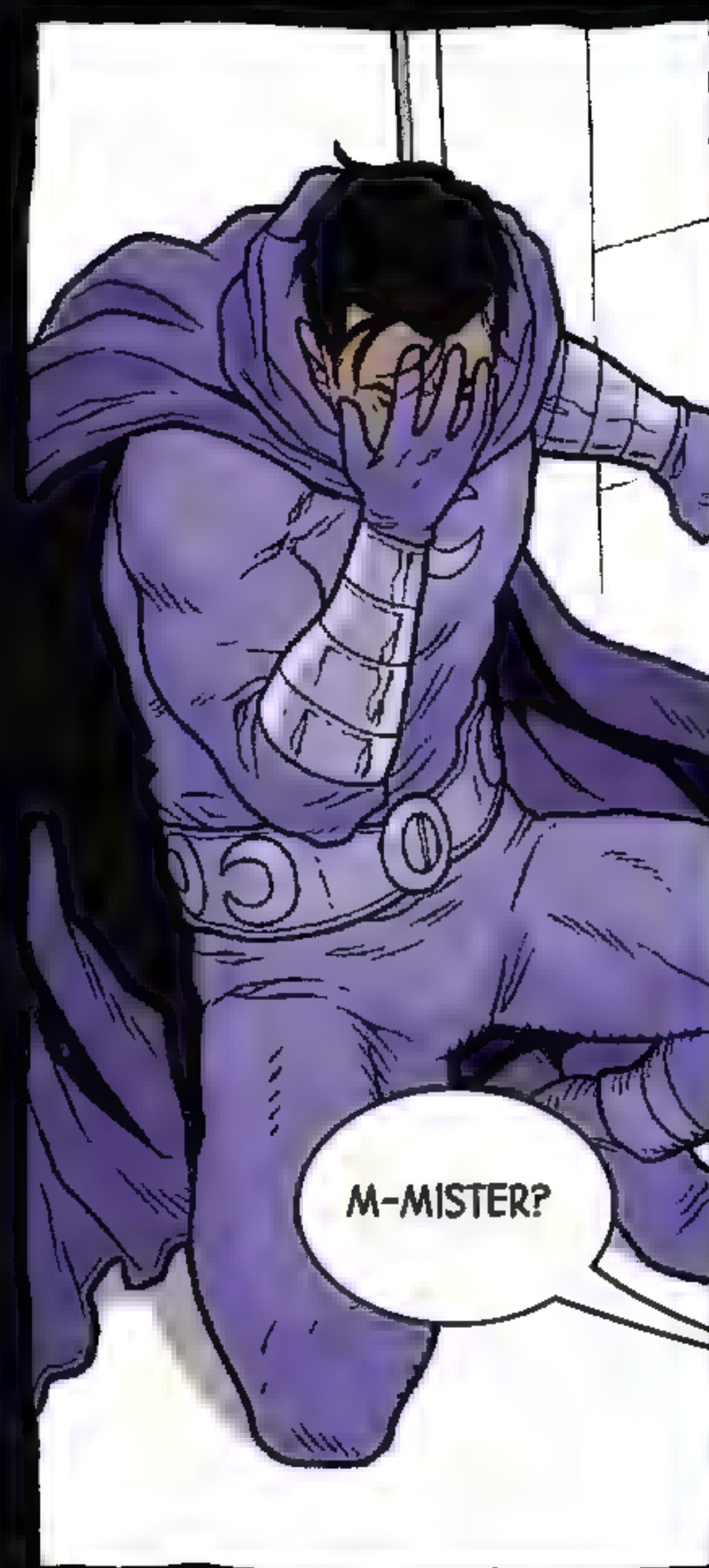
YOU
REMEMBER
YOU'RE ALSO A
DAD NOW,
RIGHT?



SOMEONE
COULD HAVE A
KNIFE TO HER
THROAT RIGHT
NOW! OUR
BABY.



GET OFF ME...



M-MISTER?



LOOK, I'M
SORRY THIS AIN'T
NO %\$&# DOLPHIN,
SPECTOR, BUT...



YOU WANT
TO GET OUT OF
HERE AND SAVE HER,
YOU NEED TO GET
YOUR **PRIORITIES**
STRAIGHT!



YOU'RE
BEING
WEAK.



DO YOU KNOW
HOW LONG I'VE HAD
TO LIVE WITH BEING YOUR
"DARK SIDE"?

IT'S NOT
A FUN PLACE TO
BE, MARC.

THE
TRAIL I'VE
HAD TO WALK
ALONE?

ALL THE
HYPODERMICS AND
BLOOD AND BROKEN
PEOPLE I'VE LEFT IN
YOUR WAKE?



I
HAD ONE
THING.

ONE THING.
ONE RAY OF HOPE,
AND THAT'S
DIATRICE.

BUT YOU
HAD TO COME
AND TAKE HER FOR
YOURSELF.

BECAUSE
THE HERO
DESERVES
IT.

"AND NOW YOU WON'T
EVEN...TO SAVE HER
LIFE? SOMETIMES HORRIBLE
DECISIONS HAVE TO BE
MADE WHEN NAZIS
GET INVOLVED.

"YOU THINK I
WANT THIS TO HAVE
TO BE MY CALL?"



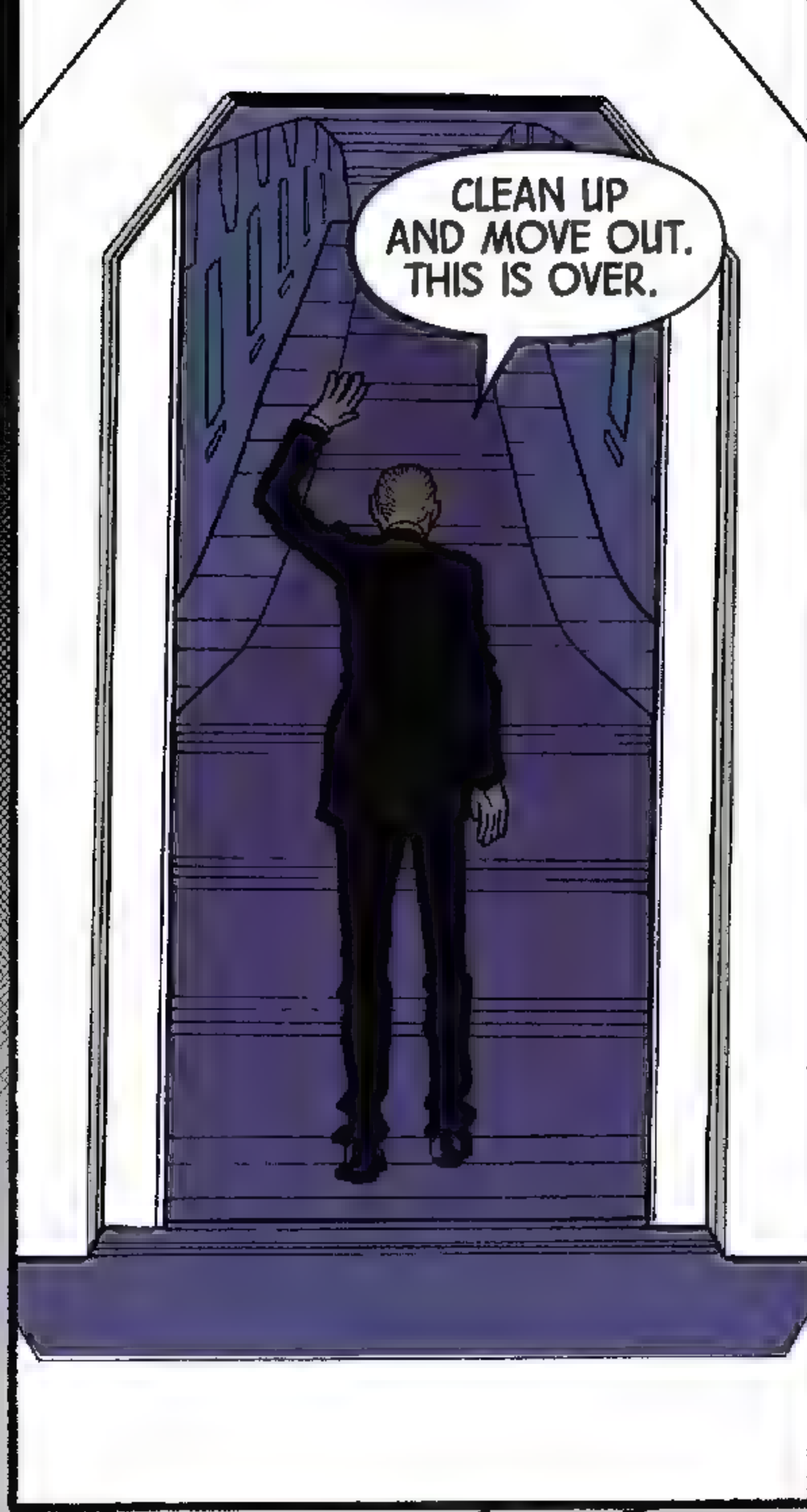
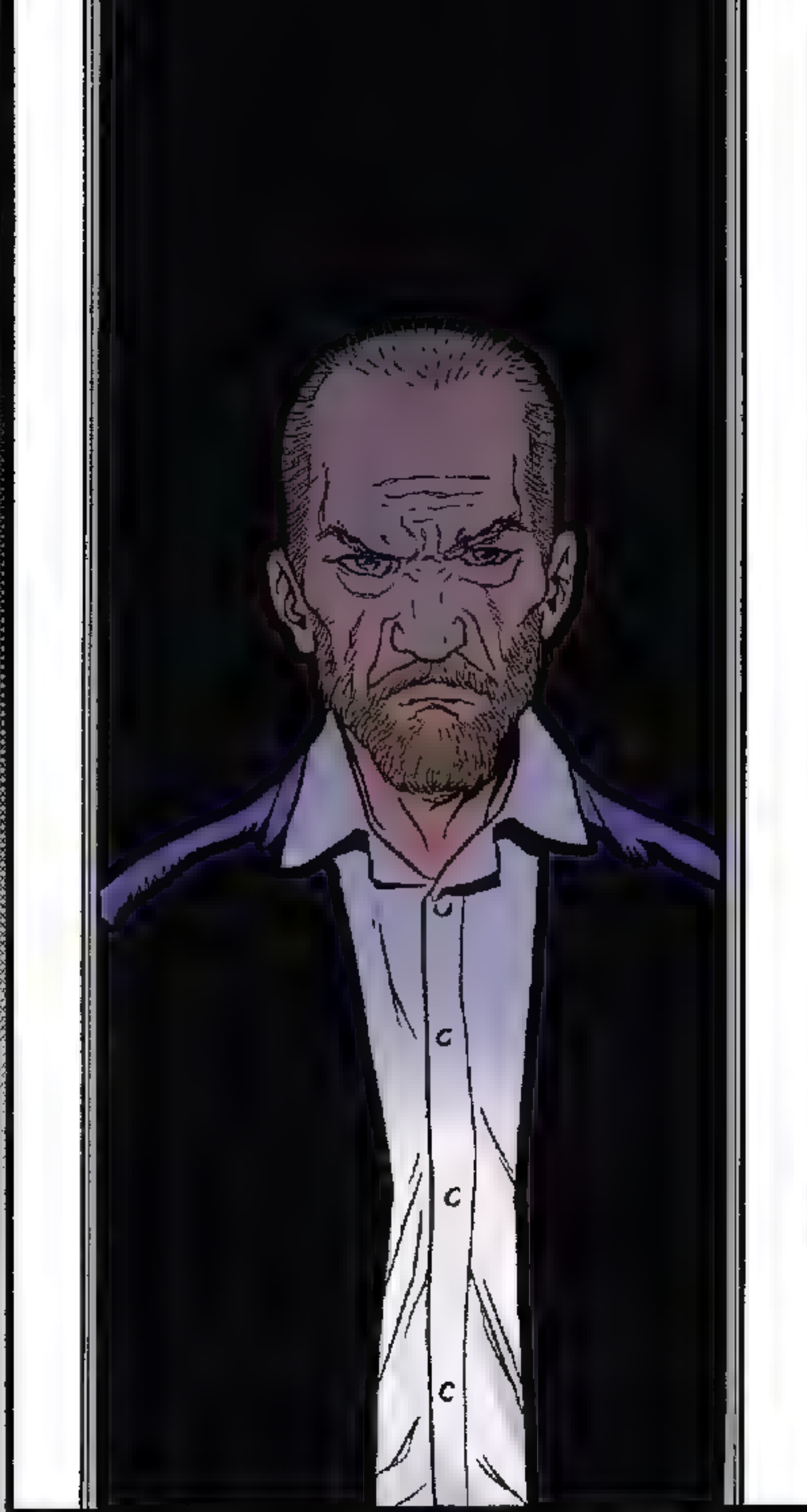
I DON'T WANNA,
I DON'T WANNA...AH
GOD...DAD...DAD, WHERE
ARE YOU? HE MADE
ME...I SAW...

HHH. I'LL
TAKE THAT AS "FEEL
FREE TO TAKE OVER
UNTIL I GROW A SET
OF STONES,
JAKE."





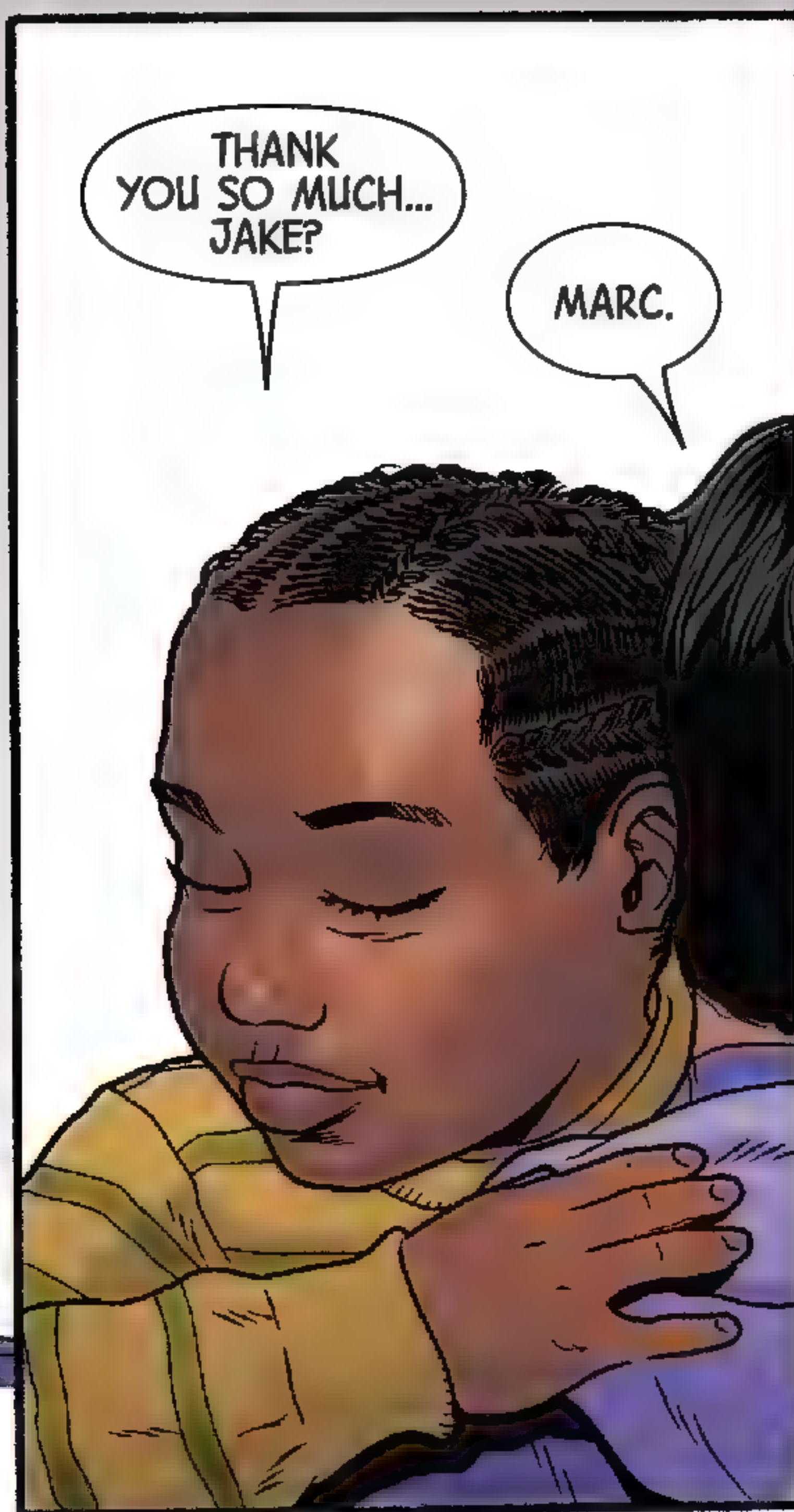
BUT...



CLEAN UP
AND MOVE OUT.
THIS IS OVER.

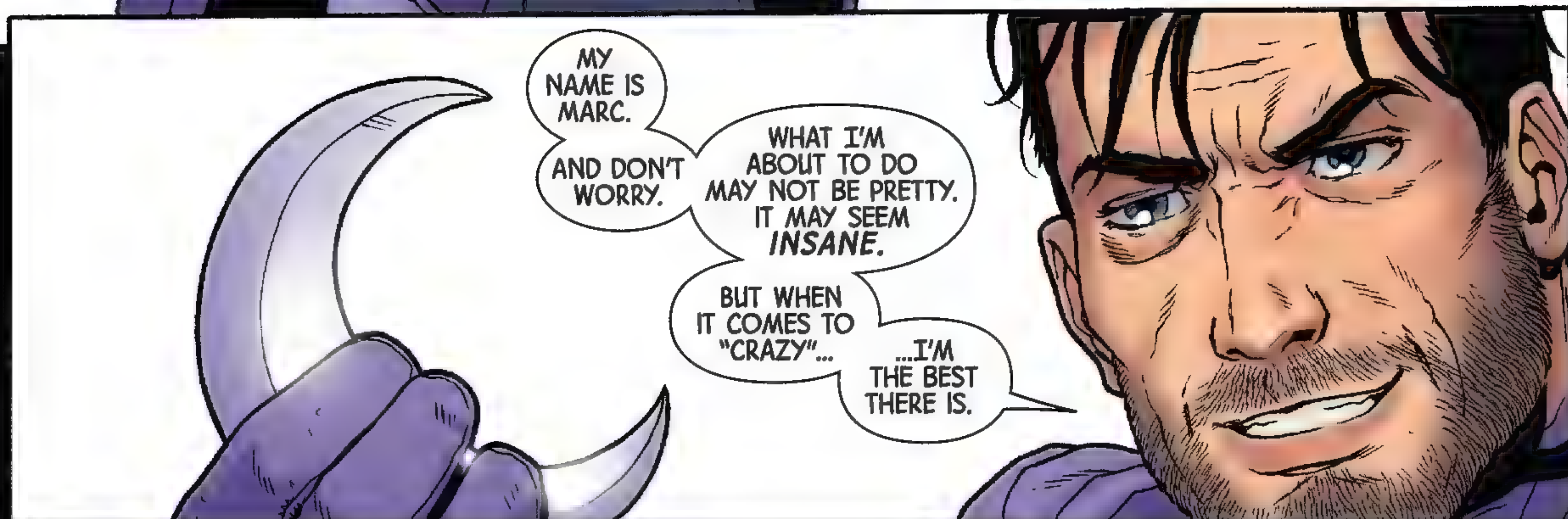


TH-THANK
YOU, MISTER.



THANK
YOU SO MUCH...
JAKE?

MARC.

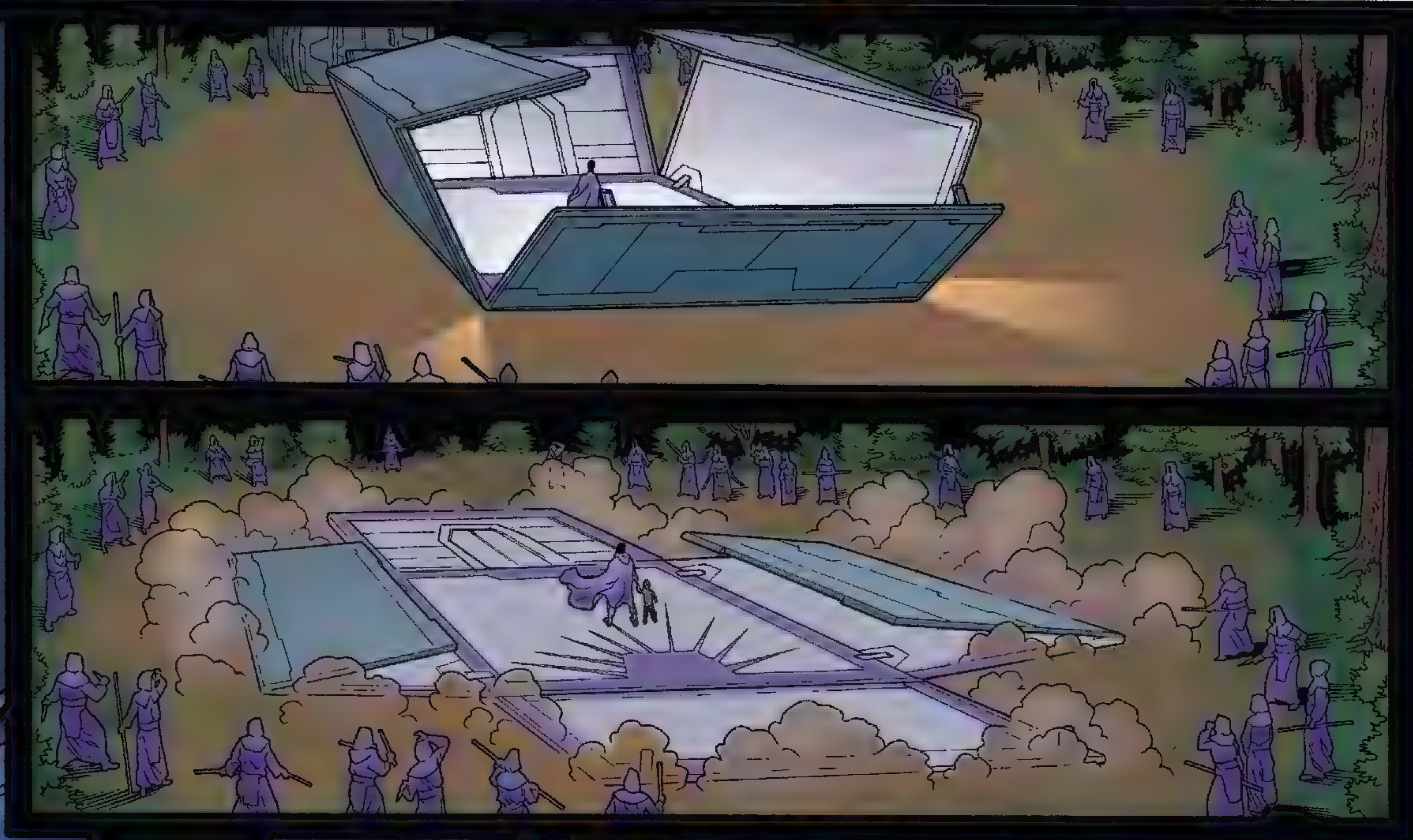
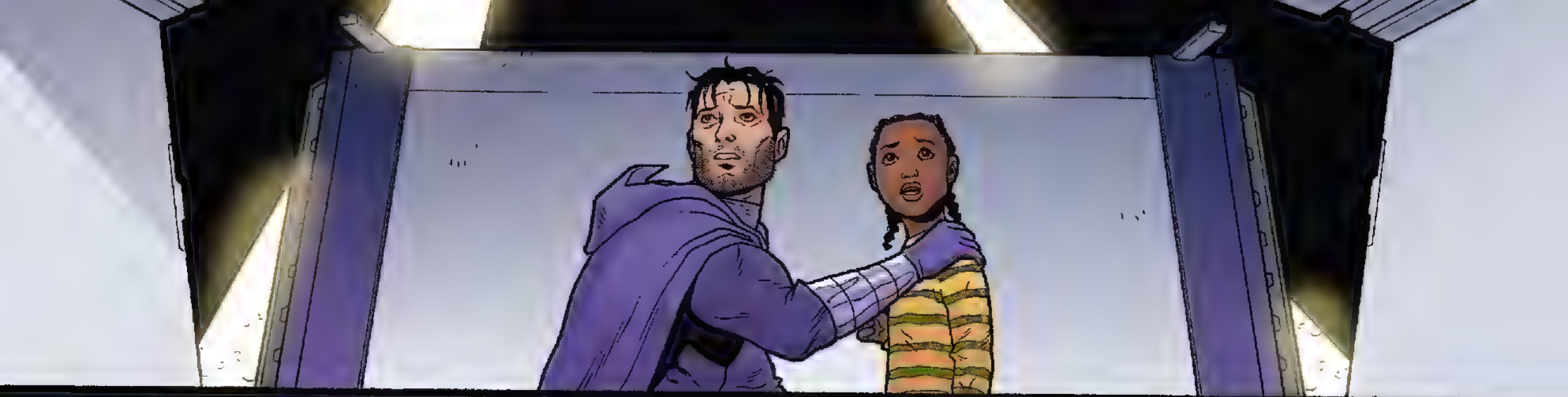


MY
NAME IS
MARC.
AND DON'T
WORRY.

WHAT I'M
ABOUT TO DO
MAY NOT BE PRETTY.
IT MAY SEEM
INSANE.

BUT WHEN
IT COMES TO
"CRAZY"...

...I'M
THE BEST
THERE IS.



"THE KILLING WAS A MEANS TO AN END. THAT WAS THE LEAST SATISFACTORY PART."
-JEFFREY LIONEL DAHMER



"A PSYCHONEUROSIS MUST BE UNDERSTOOD,
ULTIMATELY, AS THE SUFFERING OF A SOUL
WHICH HAS NOT DISCOVERED ITS MEANING."
-CARL GUSTAV JUNG

END.

MOON KNIGHT

Holy Khonshu! That Societe Des Sadiques isn't messing around! Poor Marc! What's gonna happen?!?!?

Well, we're going to answer your letters! That's what's going to happen! Enough of our lollygagging, let's get to it!

Hey team!

I've written in to MOON KNIGHT once before, when the issue that featured Marc throwing himself from the top of his brain pyramid dropped. The letter was my first to Marvel, and as a mentally ill Jew myself it was a personal one in some ways, and so I was tickled when it popped up in the issue that ended with Marc telling his alternate identities that they need to talk.

Well, issue #194 just dropped. Oy vey.

That was a wham line of an issue. But it was massively important. I know there are others who have written you expressing distaste over how the book has been handling Marc's mental illness over the last two runs, but I wanted to say that for people like me who face some similar issues, seeing Marc striving to get better is massive. Interesting conflict within yourself can come without resorting to unnecessary angst and overwrought stereotypes, as Lemire and Bemis have beautifully demonstrated. And I didn't know how important seeing the goofy pulp antics were to that until Marc leapt through the air with the power of crazy, because a mental illness isn't a death sentence and people who are cripplingly depressed, or form dissociative identities, or hallucinate (hi) deserve to laugh and be goofy and set aside the struggle for a second and live in the sunlight (...moonlight?), too.

I think a lot of us feel like we're

surrounded by Ernsts right now, popping up in places they shouldn't be with power they shouldn't have. The scariest thing about that very chilling villain monologue was that Ernst was right about a lot of stuff he shouldn't be. I hope you guys all know that stories like this inspire people like me to be Marcs even if we're swimming in a sea of Ernsts. Afraid, but fighting anyway. I'll end this letter the way I ended my last one: it's books like this that inspire me to create comics.

Love, happiness, and
crescent darts,
Jacob

Thanks so much for writing in, Jacob! As I wrote in answer to your previous letter, it means a lot to know our story is resonating with you AND that you've stuck with us in this new iteration of the title. I'm thrilled you mentioned the fun side of these recent issues. I know it's extremely important to Max to show that the struggle with mental illness, while always present, does not mean there is no joy, no silliness, no victory. I hope you're finding those moments aplenty, Jacob!

Now THAT was weird and different! In a good way. I really dug the origin of how the "collective" came together to form the Collective and how the Hive is where the minds mesh. The whole concept was bonkers and sparked my interest as to how these consciousnesses will blend once introduced to Marc, Jake, Steve, and of course...K-Man. Furthermore, the art by Paul Davidson brought the whole trippy groovy vibe together into one big beautifully drawn mental mash-up! For example, the hilarious bed scene! This looks like it's shaping up to be one of the more interesting arcs in Moon Knight's career. I'm all in!

Wolf Warner

Wolf, first of all, AWESOME name. Secondly, so glad you dug the Collective two-parter. Those scripts had me laughing out loud in the office, there are so many great moments in there. And Paul Davidson's art was so wild and inventive, he's one of those incredible artists that you can throw absolutely anything at and he'll come back with something brilliant, fun, and just perfect.

Hiya MOON KNIGHT team!

I caught myself up with the entire current MK run in about two days and felt compelled to write in to a comic for the first time ever and say how much I love it.

I only got into comics very recently (like in the past year) and I'm so glad I chose to read MK because... wow.

I'm Jewish and mentally ill and I really see myself in this depiction of Marc. Just feels nice that someone like me can struggle and still be a hero, ya feel?

I'd just like to add that you guys did a fantastic job with #194, showing his trauma and then how he explained it to his daughter. That issue nearly brought me to tears just because of how hard it hit.

Keep up the great work!!!

MK (yeah, my real initials!!!)
California

P.S. Marc was classically involved with the West Coast Avengers, any chance he'll pop up in the upcoming volume of that?

MK, I was going to ask what drew you to MOON KNIGHT in these early days of your comics fandom, but with your initials, how could you not check it out??? I am always absolutely over the moon when one of my books gets someone's first letter. To move someone enough to

write in, especially for the first time, is a true badge of honor for me! Thanks for the kind words, particularly for #194, which I think is one of the best single issues I've been a part of. As for WEST COAST AVENGERS, no Moon Knight guest appearance yet that I know of, but boy howdy am I super excited to read that book! Kelly Thompson and Stefano Caselli are two undeniable talents, I can't wait to see what they do!

#195 and #196 were great, love the Collective! It wasn't until re-reading #194 that I realized for months I've been reading comics written by the vocalist of Say Anything! Max Bemis has done great with his run for MOON KNIGHT, as well as the rest of the creative team. Props for giving us two brand-new villains, both of whom I hope to see again!

Will

Thanks for writing in, Will! When we brought in Max one of the things we really wanted to do was build up some cool new villains for Moon Knight to fight. The Collective was one of the first ideas Max pitched and I absolutely loved it. It tickles me to no end that this gonzo idea Max tossed out is now out there in the world.

The Collective is, as the late great Harlan Ellison would say, pure bug@#%&! I love it! Thanks for giving MOON KNIGHT the ol' Moon Knight treatment yet again. I love you guys and gals.

Randy Whitehair

We love you too, Randy, no matter what color your hair is! (Do you still love us after we made that joke for probably the 11 millionth time in your life?) And I love that you mentioned the dearly departed Harlan Ellison. His recent death hit me hard. There was a time in my life where I was working an overnight shift, solo, doing dispatch for a hired car company, and I spent a lot of it reading Harlan Ellison, watching his entertaining and extremely combative interviews online, and writing short stories that were pale imitations of his. If you readers love MOON KNIGHT and haven't read any Ellison, you'd probably dig him. I can't recommend him enough.

Dear MOON KNIGHT Missives,

I have never written to a comic before, but I had to after seeing the direction you're taking the current MOON KNIGHT. I started reading MOON KNIGHT with the Bill Sienkiewicz run in the early '80s. I very much enjoyed all the iterations all the way up through to the current one. Unfortunately, I feel like you are making fun of mental illness and that is no laughing matter. I've always enjoyed Moon Knight because he is a fractured hero, and the way the writers and artists work with those fractures has always been good and interesting. However, this Collective storyline is very disrespectful to people with mental illness as well as to Moon Knight's battle with it.

I would like to say one good thing about the most recent comic, as I did enjoy the many different versions of Moon Knight that were shown.

I plan to keep purchasing the comic, as I want to be supportive of Moon Knight, and hopefully one day we will be able to see him on the small or big screen, but not in the current state you have him in.

Respectfully,

Sad for Moon Knight in Knoxville,
TN

Hey SMKK, thanks for writing in. I'm sorry to hear that the recent issues haven't been completely to your liking. As discussed in the first letter of this letters page, it was very important to Max, who has been very outspoken about his battles with mental illness, that we portray Marc's illness not only in terms of struggle and hardships, but also show that there is fun and silliness to be had within that life as well. That certainly doesn't mean it's for everyone, and if it was seen as disrespectful, that was most certainly not our intention. Thank you for sticking with us, that means a great deal. I hope we can win you back over!

MOON KNIGHT team,

First, I gotta say that #196's cover is just about as perfect as a MOON KNIGHT cover can be. Second, I was wondering that since Moon Knight as a character is basically a love letter

to all those who suffer, or benefit, from mental abnormalities, do you think we could ever see Marc putting together a team of mentally unstable heroes? I mean surely Grant has those kinds of connections? I'd love to one day see some dialogue between Marc and someone like The Sentry or Scarlet Witch. Anyways, y'all are killing it with this run, keep it going!

Thanks for keeping it weird,
August B.

August, I'm so happy you mentioned Becky Cloonan's absolutely dynamite cover to #196. I think Becky's covers have been so stunningly beautiful and evocative, I'm glad other people are digging them as well. To your question, I think that's a really fascinating idea! Anything's possible in this wild and woolly Marvel Universe.

As to keeping it weird...how could I do otherwise?

Dear Moonies,

Davidson's art in MOON KNIGHT #196 was sick. A two-page spread? And the coloring by Lopes is great, too! Of course, the fact that Bemis shamelessly used Jung's concept of the collective unconscious is... well, it's shameless!

Keep up the good work. Even you, Bemis. I've got my eye on you!

Stay Weird,
Rabbi Steven Lebow
Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Lebow, we are nothing if not shameless in what we do here. Thanks so much for writing in! That Bemis is well worth keeping an eye on, he's got an imagination as deep and wide as the most collective of unconsciousnesses!

Well, that's all we've got time for this month, but keep writing in! We'll see you next month for #199, with our big issue #200 right around the corner!

And with that, Rabbi, this one's for you:

Stay Weird,
Jake T.

NEXT
MONTH:

MOON KNIGHT



Send letters to MHEROES@marvel.com, be sure to mark them "OK TO PRINT."

